Wednesday, July 16, 2008 • 9 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 222 P10 www.inquirer.net

'Helen' gains strength; storm signals raised

By TJ Burgonio

WITH THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES STILL recovering from the ravages of Typhoon "Frank," the weather bureau yesterday raised major storm signals over the northernmost provinces of Luzon as

HELEN A11

• **WBC orders Pacquiao** to give up 1 of 2 titles

SPORTS/ A26

• **Starting today and every Wednesday from hereon, 'Business Buzz'** will feature exclusive yarns out of the boardroom, juicy insider info and the grit and glitz in the world of high finance

BUSINESS/ B3

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

NOT THE SAME SHIP FOLKS Within minutes of the sinking of the MV Princess of the Stars on June 21, the cargo ship MV Ocean Papa also went under with 16 tons of a carcinogenic toxic substance (TDI,) near Maruriton Island off Calaoi coast, Antique. The DENR has alerted LGUs and neighboring communities against exposure to TDI. The ship was traveling from Manila to Iloilo. (See story in Across the Nation, Page A11.)

GMA sticks to Church line

No closure yet on NBN-ZTE controversy

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Christian V. Esguerra and Lolo B. Saleverria

IT AIN'T OVER UNTIL THE FAT LADY sings.

A day after the Supreme Court declared the $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) project with China's ZTE Corp. moot and academic because President Macapagal-Arroyo had cancelled it, her ally, Sen. Jinkoy Arroyo, called for an end to the Senate inquiry into the deal.

But Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, chair of the blue ribbon committee, said his panel was still waiting for an insider account by former Speaker Jose de Venecia and two other members of the "Travesty Group"—businessman Robert Rejoz and former police officer Quirino "Butch" Arellano.

Cayetano told reporters he was giving De Venecia up to the end of August to make his long-awaited appearance or else the Senate would move on and

NO CLOSURE/ A10

BIG, BLACK DAY Complete with veils, wave and women in black from the Kilusang Mayo Uno and the Unity for P125 Alliance are not making a fashion statement. But they are wearing their protest close to their hearts and unveiling their outrage as they march along Espana toward Plaza Miranda on Tuesday.

NOEL PABALATE

FVR on RP education: It's going to get worse

By Tarra Quismundo

ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION among the country's children is found to get worse with household incomes shrinking amid surging oil and food prices, former President Fidel Ramos said yesterday.

On the sidelines of an international media conference in Manila, Ramos said the drop in primary and secondary school enrollment cited by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) did not take into account the current economic crunch.

According to the NSCB report released over the weekend, the percentage of children enrolled in primary school dropped to 83 percent in the last schoolyear from 90 percent five years ago. The high school enrollment rate has been fixed at 58 percent for the last five years, the agency reported.

FVR ON RP/ A10

'Not enough pressure for her to alter her policy'

By Michael Lim Ubac, TJ Burgonio and Kristine L. Alave

FOLLOWING A MEETING with Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and three archbishops last week, President Macapagal-Arroyo has decided to maintain her stand against the use of contraceptives because of the weak lobby for artificial family planning methods, one of her economic advisers said yesterday.

"There are not enough pressures to make her change her policy," Albay Gov. Joey Salceda said in Placer, Masbate, where Ms Arroyo presided over a Cabinet meeting.

Salceda, who had served as chair of the House committee on appropriations, said that during a meeting with select Cabinet officials in Malacañang on Monday Ms Arroyo "kept insisting that she was just being consistent with her policy."

"Apparently, there are no people going out in the streets calling for her son to become a (rebel)-delighted," he said.

GMA STICKS/ A10

NPA rebels attack GMA security in Masbate

By Michael Lim Ubac
and Inquirer Southern Luzon

PLACER, MASBATE—A BOMBSHELL bomb exploded and firefights erupted between soldiers and communist rebels on several fronts yesterday as President Macapagal-Arroyo and her Cabinet came to Masbate for a meeting on subsidies for the poor amid soaring prices. (See related story on Page A19.)

At least one soldier was killed and two militiamen were wounded in the flare-ups of violence that occurred in the morning hours before Ms Arroyo's party arrived, and in the afternoon after her party left for Manila, military and police reports said.

The roadside blast occurred at about 2 a.m. in a barangay of Placer, some 2.6 kilometers from a school house where Ms Arroyo was to meet 10 hours later with her Cabinet, including Vice President Noli de Castro.

No one was hurt in the blast that the military said was caused by a bomb. Some police officials said the explosion was caused by a land mine.

Asked if the explosion was meant to scare Ms Arroyo and her Cabinet, PNP

NPA REBELS/ A19

Higher rainfall boosts rice output, says agri official

GOOD WEATHER CONDITIONS WILL most likely mean better-than-expected rice production in the Philippines of about 7.3 million tons in the first half of the year, according to a senior agriculture official.

"Higher rainfall this year allowed farmers to plant in wider areas, unlike last year when there was a drought," Romeo Recide, director of the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, told Reuters.

Production of unmilled rice is estimated to have reached 7.3 million tons in January to June, higher than a government target of 7.1 million and the 6.7 million tons produced in the same period of 2007, the agriculture department said in a statement.

The preliminary production data covered only 82 percent of the 1.04 million hectares devoted to rice plant-

HIGHER/ A15

BELIEVE IT OR NOT After five years of dormancy, Nida 3 will have its dry run on July 21 involving 20 domestic flights. President Arroyo's marching orders are for a "terror-proof, accident-free and criminal-shielded airport." The Cebu Pacific executive gets ready.

NOEL PABALATE

Las Piñas, QC boys choirs win golds in Austria

By Liza Zulueta

THE LAS PIÑAS BOYS CHOIR WAS declared the champion in the children's choir category of the 5th World Choir Games on July 10-14 in Graz, Austria.

But in what was perhaps a more important achievement, the Las Piñas choir won the silver medal in the second music category against professional choirs whose members were older.

Moreover, many of the choirs that participated had 40 to 60 members while the Las Piñas choir had only 20 boys.

Another Philippine choir, the Kilyawan Boys Choir of Quezon City, was declared champion in choral a capella of contemporary music category.

LAS PIÑAS/ A19

Pope goes techie, sends daily txts to youths

SYDNEY—POPE BENEDICT XVI ON Tuesday took a new hi-tech road to spreading his message, sending a mobile phone text to pilgrims attending World Youth Day celebrations in Australia, organizers said.

"Young friend, God and his people expect much from a follower a have

POPE GOES/ A11

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

SUERTRES
9 1 9 | 0 5 7 | 5 2 1
6/42 LUZON/VIS-MIN
7 11 15 24 25 32
P8,407,789.20
POWERLOTTO 5/55 + 1/18
1 23 24 27 47 + 3
P50,000,000.00

Car insurance 'monopoly' hit

GSIS takeover repressive, non-life firms warn

By Michelle V. Ramos

NON-LIFE INSURANCE companies warned that the Government Service Insurance System's attempt to take over the entire third-party liability insurance business was repressive and could drive away foreign investors.

"This will be just like martial law again," Melecio Mallillin, a trustee of the Philippine Insurance and Reinsurers Association (Pira), told reporters yesterday.

The CTPL (comprehensive third-party liability) insurance business is worth P3 billion a year, he said.

Pira, the organization of non-life insurance companies, has denounced moves to have the GSIS, the state-run pension fund, become the sole provider of CTPL policies for vehicle owners in the country.

This would constitute a monopoly, and is therefore unconstitutional, Pira said.

It said it would be contrary to the concept of market competition, provided for under the Constitution.

Pira said a GSIS takeover would also mean a loss of an estimated 60,000 industry jobs, mainly insurance agents selling CTPL policies.

CTPL is an insurance policy that covers for any possible damage that an individual may cause because of the use of his or her vehicle. The Land Transportation Office requires all vehicle owners to first secure a CTPL before registering the vehicles.

GSIS President and General Manager Winston Garcia said his proposal for the GSIS to be the sole provider of CTPL was the best solution as vehicle owners having victims killed by the allegedly rampant sale of fake CTPL policies.

Pira chair Horacio Ramos said the GSIS was exaggerating reports about the allegedly rampant sale of fake CTPL policies.

"Selling of fake CTPL policies is a thing of the past. Our industry is now able to police our own ranks," Ramos said.

Ramos said that out of the estimated 5 million vehicles registered with the Land Transportation Office for 2008, Pira has already evaluated the insurance policies covering 1.2 million of them.

Ramos said the group has already established an effective system of checking the records of insurance companies against those of the LTO.

Pira has filed a case in the Makati Regional Trial Court against the Department of Transportation and Communications for issuing Department Order 2007-28 in July last year designating the GSIS as the sole provider of CTPL policies to motorists' owners.

The court dismissed the case last month on a technicality. Pira has already filed a motion for reconsideration.

Garcia shrugs off amended graft raps

WINSTON GARCIA, PRESIDENT and general manager of the Government Service Insurance System, surely shrugged off a corruption case filed against him yesterday by a group members of the GSIS employees union.

Garcia is being made to answer for having allegedly caused over P1 billion in GSIS funds to the Office of the President in 2004.

"How could there be corruption when the entire amount went to government coffers?" Garcia said in a text message, adding that complaints, initiated by one of his critics, was politically motivated.

He said the complainant, Albert Velasco, was a dismissed employee of the GSIS.

Velasco's complaint, which he filed yesterday with the Office of the Ombudsman, is actually an amended one. Even an earlier graft complaint he filed against Garcia and the GSIS board in 2004.

The amended complaint includes as additional respondents the members of the management committee (Mancom) in 2004: Reynaldo Dilidili, Enriqueta Dimaano, Orsolito Tangco, Rolando Marmeso, Rene Sarabia, Ruben Vinluan and Felicitas Gerilero.

In his original complaint, Velasco alleged that top GSIS officials, through a board resolution, illegally disbursed the P1 billion from a surplus from the government insurance fund (GIF) on Dec. 31, 2003 to the Office of the President. Malacañang Reina and Jerome Aning

PROTECTOR. CHR chair Leila de Lima with RCBC suspect John Javier. AKIN CANO

RCBC rob-slay suspect granted CHR protection

By Marlon Ramos

SAYING HE WAS UNDER CONSTANT threat from those who killed his father, a suspect in the robbery-massacre at the Rizal Commercial Bank Corp. (RCBC) branch in Calauan, Laguna, has sought the protection of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR).

John Javier, 23, was placed under the protective custody of the CHR yesterday, barely three hours he was picked up in his Manila, Bulacan, by the commission's lawyers, his family and former Barangay Hao Dan Bicky Bravo.

"I don't trust the police anymore, especially after what they did to my father," said Javier in Filipino.

Javier's father, Vicencio, was killed by unidentified gunmen at his Barangay Bucal, who raided their house in Barangay Bagong Tanauan City, at midnight on May 22.

The police claimed Javier and six were members of the Lucido-Javier robbery gang who staged the heist and killed the 10 persons who were in the bank at the time.

Vicencio was one of four alleged suspects who were killed in three separate police operations in Batangas and Laguna one week after the robbery.

Provisional custody

CHR Chair Leila de Lima said the commission decided to grant Javier's request after she consulted the two other CHR commissioners.

De Lima said Javier's stay at the CHR was provisional.

"This is just a temporary (physical custody). It is valid only from my court. Like a warrant of arrest, its issued we will turn him over," she said as a press briefing in Quezon City.

Javier, his mother and his lawyer were signed an agreement with De Lima regarding the conditions of his stay at the CHR.

She said he advised Javier's family to go to the CHR the day after he learned of Vicencio's killing and the threats to the family.

He said Vicencio, a former barangay captain, was one of his political supporters in Tanauan.

Made up story

Reached on his mobile phone, Senior Supt. Aaron Pidol, head of Task Force RCBC, said the police respected the CHR decision to place Javier under its custody.

"He (Javier) can stay at the CHR as long as he wants," he said.

Asked about the threats on Javier, he said the suspect was only "making up a story to score up" his complicity in the case.

"We've met behind any attempts to kill him. In fact, we went him alive so he can talk about what happened to that robbery-massacre," Pidol said.

Pidol said Javier was one of six persons the police have charged with robbery with multiple homicide in connection with the bloody bank job.

He said one of the witnesses saw Javier arrive the bank on the day of the incident.

He also believed was as he (Javier) "participated" the police team that shot and killed the other Javier.

In an interview with the lawyers, John Javier said he was asleep at home when the robbery occurred on May 16.

He said he only learned about the incident when he saw it on television on same that day.

Lawyer says wounded girl 'escaped' from Karapatan

By Nikko Dizon

MARIA GUMANOY

SHE FELT THAT THE SU- near eight group that took up her cause "was not working for her interest" and this made Rose Ann Guimanoy, the daughter of a slain peasant leader, leave their protection, her lawyer said.

Karapatan's failure to take her to a court hearing for her rebellion case, the frequent transfer of safehouses, and having to care for a sick sister prompted Rose Ann to leave the military for help, said lawyer Bandeo Vega.

"That was the reason why she escaped from (Karapatan's) custody along with her sister," Vega said.

Karapatan and Maria Guimanoy, Rose Ann's mother, have insisted that Rose Ann and her sister Bernice—the daughters of slain peasant leader Eddie Guimanoy who was allegedly murdered by the military— were abducted by the military last July 3.

However, Rose Anne reclassed a few days later to deny that she and her sister had been kidnapped and to say that it was she who convinced the soldiers whom she had befriended while undergoing treatment at the AFP Medical Center in Metro Manila.

Rose Anne, 21, an alleged member of the communist New People's Army was injured in the arm during an encounter with government troops in General Nakar, Quezon last April.

The military filed a rebellion case against her before a court in Infanta, Quezon. Karapatan claimed bail for her and part of the conditions set by the court was for Rose Anne to attend scheduled court hearings.

Vega said Karapatan's failure to bring Rose Anne to a hearing resulted in the court issuing a warrant of arrest against her.

Cebu Pacific holds Naia3 'wet run'

By Tarra Quismundo

CEBU PACIFIC AIR (CEB) YESTERDAY conducted full simulation exercises of departure and arrival flights at the multi-billion Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 (Naia 3) to check passengers and baggage flow in preparation for its partial domestic operations next week.

During what airline officials called a "wet run," 72 passengers and squads of airline ground crew tested check-in, security screening, luggage X-ray and tagging, boarding, deplaning and baggage retrieval at the section of the terminal opened for partial local operations.

"Barring any unwanted incident, if everything works out today, we plan to start partial domestic operations here," said CEB spokesperson Candice Iyog.

The airline is expected to start operations at Naia 3 on July 20, with daily flights to Laoag, Catarlan, Iloilo, Cebu, Davao, Zamboanga and Naga using two 72-seater ATR turbo props, airline and airport officials said.

Naia Task Force chair Michael Defensor had announced on Monday that opening day for Terminal 3 would be on July 20 but Naia officials gave no comment on the schedule conflict.

Moving to bigger facility

The test went underway after CEB, a major domestic carrier, signed a "conclusion letter" agreement with the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) for runway operations at the soon-to-open terminal.

While it has yet to become a formal contract, the agreement allows CEB to initially operate daily flights within six months to a year, said Mina development and corporate affairs chief Tina Invierno.

A similar arrangement is currently being finalized with flag carrier Philippine Airlines' budget brand PAL Express, Serrano added.

Short of flying

During yesterday's simulation, CEB used an ATR plane that arrived in Manila at around 7 p.m. from its regular daily trips. Test passengers were given actual tickets for check-in and boarding. Armed personnel, including dismantling and baggage retrieval were also tested.

Airline and airport officials called the simulation the most comprehensive test yet, short of the plane actually taking off from Naia 3, as previous tests did not simulate passenger check-in and baggage procedures.

Naia 3 is set to open next week after six years of delay because of legal and structural problems. More than 90 percent of the terminal was completed in 2002 but the facility remained shut because of several controversies. Airport officials said the partial opening would push on despite pending legal cases. With a report from AFP

Comelec stands by 3 commissioners

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS IS standing behind three newly appointed commissioners who are scheduled to go to Congress later this month to seek approval from the powerful Commission on Appointments.

"We have a high respect for the members of the CA body and we are confident that our newly appointed Comelec commissioners will be given the opportunity to clear their names of the unfounded allegations unduly leveled at them," the Comelec said in a statement yesterday.

Comelec spokesperson James Jimenez said the poll body "welcomes the CA's scrutiny" of Commissioners Leonardo Leonardo, Jose Tagle and Mokaram Macarambon.

Leonardo, a former trial court judge, and Tagle, who recently retired from the Court of Appeals, were appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo last month.

Macarambon was appointed last November and has been bypassed twice by the CA.

Jimenez said the CA is a "venue where the newly appointed commissioners can prove their critics wrong."

"Commissioners Macarambon, Leonardo and Tagle are men of integrity and probity and it is unfair to malign them with unfounded accusations and baseless intrigues," he said. Kristine L. Alave

Foreign experts now in Sibuyan

By Nina Catherine Calleja
Inquirer Southern Luzon

SAN FERNANDO, SIBUYAN ISLAND—A three-member team of experts from the European Union arrived here yesterday to assist in the environmental safety assessment of the ship where the 800 Princess of the Stars remained.

Antonino Brij, civil protection officer of the European Union, arrived for the three-day tour with Swedish toxicologist Dr. Rune Berglun and French marine chemist Dr. Stephan Le Floch.

The team was invited by the Philippine government to help determine how to handle some 70 metric tons of the toxic endosulfan pesticide that remain in the hull of the stricken ferry in addition to an estimated 110,000 liters of bunker fuel.

They were flanked from the Tagbilaran Airport on Bohol Island by the Philippine Coast Guard and brought for a brief sweep of the waters.

The ferry sank at the height of Typhoon "Frank" last June 21 with over 700 passengers on board.

The European team then proceeded to a temporary laboratory set up at the clinic of Pulanduan Elementary School. The Department of Agriculture brought in a gas chromatography machine, which performs residue analysis of toxic chemicals.

The European experts said their goal was not to conduct more tests but to help analyze consolidate new data gathered by government agencies.

In a previous interview, however, Bureau of Plant Industry chemist Nicanor Peñez said the impress that that they have yet to start tests.

Two agencies—the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the Marine Environment Protection Command of the Philippine Coast Guard—were reportedly conducting daily tests but none of the samples had been submitted to the laboratory, he said.

United Auctioneers, Inc.
JULY 30, 31 & AUGUST 1, 2008
(WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY & FRIDAY)
ALL EQUIPMENT WILL BE PARADED ON AUCTION DAY
1,500 LOTS ALL MUST GO
INSPECTION DATES: JULY 27, 28 & 29, 2008
CATERPILLAR D6H
TEL. NOS. (047) 252-1139 • 252-1155 TO 58 • (02) 889-4838
(02) 751-5781 • 09.178.4581 • 0917.5263604 • 0917.6181909 • 0918.9181909
FAX: (047) 252-1588 EMAIL: ua@uauctioneers.net VISIT: www.uauctioneers.net

Do You Have Papaya Thighs?
Frustrated with those papaya thighs that won't budge with exercise and diets?
Wifi Marie France's Vara Pulse Fat Reducer treatments, ultrasonic waves break down the stubborn fat on the upper thighs, reshaping them and making them slimmer and sexier. No surgery or injections. Just safe, painless and effective treatments that have actual results! Get them for FREE and find out for yourself!
5 FREE VARA PULSE FAT REDUCER TREATMENTS
*Upon enrollment from July 14-19, 2008 only
Call 894-BODY (2639)
marie france

Loren seeks probe of Palace expenses

THE SENATE IS BEING URGED to look into the frivolous expenses and irregular disbursements of Malacañang, including over P1 billion in travel expenses, cash advances and directed donations, based on a 2007 Commission on Audit report.

Sen. Loren Legarda has filed Senate Resolution No. 495 seeking an investigation of the Office of the President for allegedly making irregular transactions such as unliquidated cash advances, loans without records, donations directed to cash not properly liquidated, undocumented expenses and unreturned accounts.

Legarda said the COA report showed that the President chalked up P586.5 million in foreign travel expenses and P514.1 million in domestic travel expenses, received P88 million donations easily half of which were for unfounded purposes; and cash advances of P899 million to non-employees of the Office of the President.

"The government is spending the people's money as if money is going out of style. Is this the way the government should spend the people's money?" asked Legarda in her resolution.

"Transparency needs to be ensured in allocating government funds. Allocating these funds should not depend on the whim of a few government executives," she said.

Legarda said there was a need to rein in Malacañang's questionable expenses considering that the country was to deal with economic crisis—inflation had hit 11.4 percent, its highest since 1994, and the economy has slowed to 5.2 percent as measured by the gross domestic product in the first quarter this year from 7 percent a year ago.

"This is translation outspending of public funds no matter how you measure it. We ask the people to tighten their belts when the government itself cannot do the same amid worsening economic conditions," said Legarda. GMA Cabucungan Jr.

HOLIDAYS SPECIAL
HONGKONG / MACAU $349
AUSTRALIA $799
NEPAL $850
BANGKOK $205
SHANGHAI $438
SINGAPORE $249
SIEMREAP $850
VIETNAM $318
AUCKLAND $1999
JAPAN $798
WORLD WINGS
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURS CORPORATION

BONCO Builders' Hardware
DEXTERTON

THE DAILY GOSPEL
Wednesday, July 16, 2008
15th Week in Ordinary Time
Our Lady of Mount Carmel
1st Reading: Is 10:5-7, 13b-16
Gospel: Mt 11:25-27

Corrections

IN THE JULY 10 issue, Manuel L. Quezon III's "The Long View" column on Page A11 of the Opinion section—"Embracing Fractured"—misprinted the address of the website of the University of Western Australia, Perth. The Web address is www.uwa.edu.au.

IN THE JULY 11 issue, a front-page story—"Philippine is Taiwan-bound cameras," leads in "(E-pid)"—compelled the name of a royal dynasty that ruled in Europe for centuries. The dynasty is called Hapsburg—not Hapkeys.

Readers may send their reports for corrections of factual errors in writing to the Inquirer Reader's Representative Emily Noguera Ortiz Building, Doña Hemady corner Alexander Streets, Makati City; fax (632) 896-6214; e-mail address: ask@inquirer.com.ph.

Complete Rules of Engagement may be sent to the Publisher's e-mail address: publisher@inquirer.com.ph or fax the letter to (632) 896-6214. Attn: The Publisher. Please mention a contact phone number.

'Halal' cuisine to lure Muslim tourists to RP spots – Durano

By Margaux C. Ortiz

MAKING HALAL CUISINE READILY available in tourist destinations will encourage more tourists from Muslim countries to visit the Philippines.

This is according to officials of the Department of Tourism (DOT), who yesterday stressed the need to intensify the promotion and availability of halal food.

Halal food would help the country get a bigger share of the global Muslim tourist market, said Tourism Secretary Ace Durano.

"There is a need to make our Muslim tourists and travelers more welcome by having more establishments cater to their dietary requirements," Durano said in a statement.

The DOT co-sponsored the recent National Halal Convention held at the Philippine Trade Training Center in Pasay City.

The two-day event gathered 600 local and national government officials, Muslim religious leaders and experts, food manufacturers and exporters, certification professionals, local and international civic group representatives and diplomats to discuss issues on improving the production of and access to halal food in key consumer areas in the country.

"The department is striving to help make halal cuisine available in our tourist destinations in anticipation of the influx of travelers from Malaysia and the Gulf States," said DOT director for product research and development, Elizabeth Solis.

The department implements a country-wide program that advocates the preparation and promotion of halal meals and food products in hotels, restaurants, resorts and eateries.

TARGET CCTV CAMERA
24-hour Video Surveillance in operation
INFINITE SYSTEMS ☎ 892-9073

NIDEKA BURST CLOCK
• 2 Color Printing
• Built-in Back-up Battery
• Uses Standard Time Cards
• 1 Year Warranty on Parts and Service
INFINITE SYSTEMS 892-9073 to 77

HONDA
The Power of Dreams
200,000th Customer Milestone
It's more than an achievement. It's a celebration!
• Awesome cash incentives for select Honda CR-V and Civic models
• Free items for select Honda CR-V and Civic models
• Great financing deals on all Honda units*
PLUS! Reservation fee for a brand new CR-V is a good for passing Honda owners
Bring this ad to your nearest Authorized Honda Dealer and inquire about the CR-V, for a chance to get a free gift!
For more info on how you can be part of our 200,000th customer milestone celebration, visit us at www.hondaphil.com
HONDA

A Magical Hong Kong Disneyland Adventure
FOR AS LOW AS USD 285 PER PERSON*
Philippine Airlines Swingaround Hong Kong Disneyland
Package inclusions:
- Round trip Economy Class airfare
- 2D/1N hotel accommodation in a Garden View Room at Disney's Hollywood Hotel or Twin Disney Inn
- Airport hotel-airport van in coach transfers
- 1 day Hong Kong Disneyland pass
- Ticketing must be completed at least 14 days before departure
- Package is valid until 31 March 2009
Take a lead role in the hottest attractions in Hong Kong Disneyland
Now's your chance to be a star at a host of new attractions at Hong Kong Disneyland! You'll dazzle the audience as you strut your stuff with the energetic High School Musical - LIVE! Float dancers. Then head over to it's a small world where you can sing along with the loveable characters. Volunteer to be Dr Bunsen Honeydew and Beaker's lab assistant in the high tech Muppet Mobile Lab and take centre stage at the Finding Nemo, Turtle Talk with Crush show, where you'll interact with Crush in real time!
67 Years Philippine Airlines Clearly No.1
www.philippineairlines.com
Hong Kong Disneyland
*Based on Low Season. Peak season surcharge will apply.

CAPABILITY UPGRADE PROGRAM

AFP modernization on track with P12-B start

By Nikko Dizon

IS THE MODERNization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines finally on track?

A top military official said yesterday close to P12 billion has been spent since last year to upgrade the country's external defenses, mainly against the four-decade-old communist insurgency.

Air Force Maj. Gen. Gilbert Llanes, deputy chief of staff for plans of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, said the amount represented Phase I of the P16-billion revised Capability Upgrade Program (CUP) that was ordered released by President Macapagal-Arroyo when she served as defense secretary in concurrent capacity in January 2007.

The money was released in the wake of the President's bold directive to the AFP to crush the leftist New People's Army by 2010, Llanes said.

"We realized our inability to link the ISO (internal security operations) elements was ground-based mainly on the defense modality assets that we had. Our firepowers were outranged and a lot of them needed upgrading or changing," he said.

With the P12 billion, the AFP was able to purchase military materiel such as automatic weapons, "secure" communications equipment, mortar ammunition storage facilities and trucks to allow the troops to "move, shoot and communicate" properly.

While some of the equipment have been delivered, others like the communications equipment for the ground troops worth around P6 billion have yet to be received by the AFP.

These are expected to arrive in the next three to six months, Llanes said.

For Phase 2 of the CUP, the balance of P22 billion has been earmarked for the acquisition of equipment that would allow for better troop mobility.

These include new light IA aircraft for the Air Force, armor craft for the Army to use in counter- and swamplands, and inshore patrol vessels for the Navy, among other things.

"If we can acquire the equipment as specified in Phases 1 and 2, we can improve our capability to a level of 70 percent based on our capability assessment for internal security," Llanes said.

The CUP is part of the stalled MIF Modernization Law which was aimed at equipping the military for territorial defense with a P300-billion funding.

But with Congress unable to provide the AFP with the capital outlay, the military settled for a revised Capability Upgrade Program that focused on the military's IRO operations. The CUP billy-under Horizon 1, the first part of the AFP Modernization Program.

Completion of Horizon 1 is timed with the end of President Arroyo's term in 2010. The second half of 2009 will see the entry of Horizon 2 which will be the AFP's six-year transition to territorial defense.

"Horizon 2 is the planning process," Llanes said.

Finally, under Horizon 3, the AFP will enter the era of territorial defense. "The real modernization," according to Llanes, where the military will be equipped against external aggressors.

R&A REEVES & ASSOCIATES

AAA+ Law Staff Who Were Formerly Employed by The USCIS (previously INS) State Department (US Embassy), and The Immigration Courts

- Robert J. Reeves is Board Certified Immigration Law Specialist
- Will Infer Leading Full Service Immigration Firm in The United States Practicing Immigration to Most Than a Quarter of a Century
- Will Is Internationally Known for Its Success in Obtaining Family & Business Visa, Deportation Defense and Finding Solutions for Complex Cases
- Backed by a Team of Immigration Experts & Professionals Devoted Exclusively to Obtaining Non-Immigrant and Immigrant Visa
- Won Over Successfully Deportation Case 20,000 Times

Call us for your immigration solution
1-800-773-3837 or (2)759-6777
visit www.rreeves.com

"We make success stories happen everyday."

Soap Making, Marketing Techniques at UP

The Diamond Skills and Livelihood Training Services will unveil its latest innovative marketing techniques in a one-day strategic Soap-Making Summit at University of the Philippines campus on July 26, 2008, Saturday, 10am-5pm. Courses on producing high quality yet low cost products such as processed detergent, fabric softener, glass and toilet bowl cleaner, dishwashing liquid, car shampoo, chlorox, hand and herbal bath soap (cucumber, papaya, etc.). The training will be at P. Benitez Hall at Vinzons st., cor. Magsaysay Ave., UP Diliman. Contact Ms. Josie UP Theaters for inquiries call Libby at 435-2560, 357-8557 and mobile 09165700235.

American found dead

CEBU CITY—AN AMERICAN NAVIGOR was found dead inside his rented room in Barangay Banak, Lapu-Lapu City on Monday.

The police identified the finally as 79-year-old Hollis Thomas Hanson of 504 Highway 180, Port Isabel, Texas.

Homicide investigator Supt. Reggie of the Lapu-Lapu City police said Hanson was found with his hands tied behind his back and a ban wound covering his mouth and nose.

His body was discovered after two neighbors went to see him to return his identification cards, found some 100 meters away from the apartment where he rented a room. Dharmie Mapalacan, Inquirer Visayas

Giving Light To Life

A healthy mind makes life well-defined

*QUESTIONS	NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS
Do you have trouble sleeping?	○	○	○	○
Are you depressed?	○	○	○	○
Do you have suicidal thoughts?	○	○	○	○
Do you feel guilty?	○	○	○	○
Are you hostile?	○	○	○	○
Are you overconfident?	○	○	○	○
Do you have feelings of grandeur?	○	○	○	○
Are you suspicious?	○	○	○	○
Do you see or hear things other people don't?	○	○	○	○
Are your thoughts disorganized?	○	○	○	○
Are you overly concerned with your appearance?	○	○	○	○
Are you tense?	○	○	○	○
Are you excited?	○	○	○	○
Do you find it difficult to concentrate?	○	○	○	○
Do you have odd mannerisms?	○	○	○	○

*Adapted from Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS)

If you answered "often" and "always" to most of the questions, you may be suffering from mental illness, a condition that affects millions of people worldwide.

Otsuka (Philippines) Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (OPPI) recently launched "*Light One's Life: A Patient Quality of Life Program.*" The program aims to heighten awareness on mental illnesses, such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, and to educate patients and families about these conditions.

Let's Light One's Life.

For more information, call Light One's Life Helpline at 911-4723 for Greater Manila Area (GMA), or 1-800-1888-4723 for calls outside GMA, Mondays to Fridays from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

This is a message of concern from OPPI in partnership with Philippine Psychiatric Association (PPA).

Otsuka

Suite 1011 10th Floor
Medical Plaza Ortigas Condominium
San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center
Pasig City 1600
www.ppa.ph

No more lunch breaks at the immigration office, Libanan orders

By Margaux C. Ortiz

NO MORE LUNCH BREAKS AT THE BIRE: premier office.

Bureau of Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan yesterday issued an order that employees at the BI main office in Intramuros take turns manning the receiving windows and having lunch so the office would remain open between 12 noon and 1 p.m.

"The new no-lunch break policy will further speed up the processing time for visas and visa extensions as well as for other documents issued by the bureau," Libanan said.

He added that relaxed policies and reforms such as on the Visa Issuance Made Simple, IVIMS) and the Pre-Arranged Visa Upon Arrival (VUA) have expedited the processing of BI documents.

"The schemes resulted in shorter and more efficient processing of visas and visa extensions as shown by the feedback sent through e-mail by the transacting public," Libanan said.

"To this end, applications for visa extensions take 15 to 30 days to finish. Most applications filed in the morning can be approved and released in the afternoon," he added.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
CONTACT US AT 484-9091/ 484-9096/ 415-0025/ 0928-7754698
OR VISIT OUR WEBSITES
WWW.THEFORTVICTORIA.COM / WWW.NEWSANJOSEBUILDERS.COM
E-MAIL US AT: SALES@NEWSANJOSEBUILDERS.COM

New San Jose Builders, Inc.
Developer • Planner • Builder • Marketing

Statement of Solidarity and Support

We, the undersigned insurance companies, commit our full support and participation in the new and much-improved system of procuring compulsory third party liability (CTPL) insurance coverage for motor vehicles being registered with the Land Transportation Office (LTO).

Our support goes to the Integrated Insurance Registration System as proposed by the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and approved for implementation under department order 2007-28 issued by the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) on July 5, 2007.

We take note of the adoption of the GSIS CTPL Reform Program by the Insurance Commission (IC) as reflected in the memorandum of agreement dated July 1, 2008, which the IC signed with the DOTC, LTO, GSIS and STRADCOM.

This expression of solidarity is in line with our goal to provide the public only the best insurance products for their needs. Likewise, the time has come to put an end to the long-festering problem of the proliferation of fake CTPLs.

Mabuhay ang insurance industry!
Mabuhay ang DOTC-LTO-STRADCOM-IC-GSIS CTPL Reform Program!
Mabuhay ang Pilipinas!

National Reinsurance Corporation of the Philippines

and

- AFP General Insurance Corporation
- Bank of the Philippine Island Mitsui
- Sumitomo Insurance Corporation
- Mapfre Insular Insurance Corporation
- Pioneer Insurance & Surety Corporation
- Pioneer Intercontinental Ins. Co. Inc.
- Seaboard Eastern Ins. Co. Inc.
- Empire Insurance Company
- Manila Surety and Fidelity Co. Inc.
- Monarch Ins. Co. Inc.
- Visayan Surety & Surety Corp.
- Covenant Assurance Co. Inc.
- Eastern Assurance & Surety Corp.
- First Nationwide Assurance Corp.
- Sterling Insurance Co. Inc.
- Value Life Financial Ins. Co. Inc.
- New India Assurance Co. Ltd.
- Phil. National Bank General Insurance Co. Inc.
- Malayan Insurance Co. Inc.
- Tokio Marine Malayan Ins. Co. Inc.
- Malayan Zurich Ins. Co. Inc.
- Meridian Insurance Corporation
- Allied Bankers Insurance Corp.
- Asia United Insurance Inc.
- Cibeles Insurance Corporation
- Pioneer Asia Insurance Corporation
- Philippine General Insurance Corp.
- Philippine British Insurance Co
- Insurance Co. of the Phil. Island
- Equitable Insurance Corporation
- Finman General Assurance Corp.
- FLT Prime Insurance Corporation
- Stronghold Insurance Co. Inc.
- Premier Insurance & Surety Corp.
- Utility Assurance Corporation
- UCPB General Insurance Co. Inc.

PNP to roll out electric patrol carts

By Alexis Pope

BIGHT OF THE GAMING OLYMPICS, THE Philippine National Police has rolled out an electric cart to cut macro patrol smell areas like the vicinity of shopping malls and subdivisions.

PNP Director General Avelino Razon said the vehicles—akin to a golf cart—would allow the force to give more attention to the fight against car pullsnatchers.

The electric carts, Razon said, would initially be used around malls in the cities of Makati, Pasay and Sara Rosa.

"This prototype patrol car is powered by electricity and does not use gasoline so we can save on gas. At the same time, we can increase the patrolled of Manning Police with increased response," Razon said in an interview.

Noise-free

The national police chief personally test-drove the vehicle around Camp Crame on Monday to ensure that it was easy to drive, was noise-free and did not emit pollutant emissions.

Unlike the more common four-seater golf cart, however, the patrol vehicle can carry four passengers. It will still have to undergo field tests to determine its feasibility as a permanent feature of police work around the country.

The cart comes equipped with fixed and tail lights and police blinkers but does not have decals. It can travel about distances with a top speed of 20 kph.

"It is not intended to run after criminals but only to patrol the streets as part of increased police visibility," Razon said.

He said that if the cart were made part of the PNP's fleet of vehicles, it would cut down on the force's dependence on expensive fuel. Previously, the PNP took to using bicycles for street patrols.

Saipan back pay for RP workers

SAIPAN, Philippines.—The U.S. Department of Labor is seeking 151 Filipino construction workers' unpaid wages that were owed between March 19, 1999, and Dec. 7, 2001, in the U.S. commonwealth. It cancel about 2,000 miles (3,218 kilometers) southwest of Manila.

Labor Department officials say the workers were not paid overtime wages for all hours worked in accordance with the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act. AP

3 Pinays killed in Dubai

THREE FILIPINO women were killed in a road accident in Dubai on Sunday while two companions, both nurses, were in critical condition in the Rashid Hospital there, the Department of Foreign Affairs reported this today.

Philippine Consul General in Dubai/Sharjah Edgardo Valentino told the DFA the five overseas Filipino workers were passengers in a van that was taking them to work when the accident happened at about 6:30 a.m.

The DFA did not identify the casualties pending notification of their families in the Philippines.

The Egyptian driver and the Indian passenger were also killed while a fourth Filipina was injured, the DFA said.

The OFWS were employed by the Abu Dhabi National Plastic Co./Carpets Company, the DFA said.

"The consulate is coordinating with the company and Dubai authorities on the repatriation of the bodies and the care of the injured," DFA spokesperson Claro Cristobal said.

The police were the Arab News said the two-seated late a road but no seat belt. The driver, it said, was at on the opposite side of the road.

It quoted an initial police report as saying the Egyptian bus driver lost control of the vehicle.

Arab News quoted Maj. Gen. Khamis Matter al-Mazroiei, saying Dubai police died, as describing the loss of life in Dubai's roads as "senseless," noting that nine people were killed in road accidents in the past ten days.

Al-Mazroiei said four other people were killed in Dubai on Friday in different accidents that occurred in a span of seven hours.

Cynthia D. Rebong

United Trust ENDING CORP.
2% CAR/TRUCK LOAN
YR. MODEL 1995-2002
PAY OFF FOR DUE W/ BANK
(0449) 8196 719 2189/ 521 0577
1 HOUR RELEASE

The CONVENIENT WAY to Drink Virgin Coconut Oil!
COGEL
Soft Gelatin Capsule
Available at Mercury Drug and Leading Drugstores Nationwide
Hotline: 722-7713 loc 2 (02) 521-56-01
A Quality Product of Tarmoudis, Inc.

idec
Split Type Wall Mounted Aircon
1hp-P16,500
Free Installation!

EUROTILES
FACTORY SALE
UP TO 50% OFF!!!
MONDAYS THRU SATURDAYS 8:00am to 4:00pm
ALSO AVAILABLE
Imported Tiles at very low prices

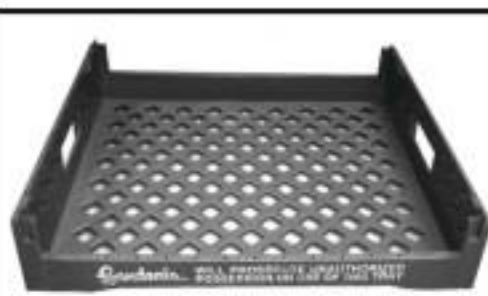
SAINT MARY'S College of San Jose
721-8938 to 39

COPIER
COPYTRADE

NBR
WORLD'S FINEST BEARING FOR THE PAST 20 YEARS.

Most Complete Line of Cleaning Equipment
P3,700
ORIGINAL EQUIPMENT for CARPENTER BUSINESS
P39,500
INDUSTRIAL HIGH PRESSURE WASHER UP TO 7000 PSI AVAILABLE
GLENROTE COMMERCIAL INCORPORATED
Tel. Nos.: 5320239 • 5340108 • 7240020
San Lorenzo: 0922-8625106 • 0917-7960576
Tel. 7400581 • 7401709

generics
wholesale
www.ONE-GENERICS.com



NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is given to all concerned that the bread trays with the Gardenia markings as shown above, are owned and are the sole property of **Gardenia Bakeries (Philippines), Inc.**, and are NOT being sold, donated, leased out or in any manner transferred to any other party, individual, corporation, or entity. Neither has Gardenia authorized its use by any party, individual, corporation or entity.

ANY PERSON, CORPORATION OR ENTITY OTHER THAN GARDENIA WHO SHALL POSSESS, ACQUIRE, CONCEAL, SELL, DESTROY, DEFACE, MUTILATE, OR DISPOSE OF SAID GARDENIA TRAYS SHALL BE CHARGED CRIMINALLY.

Should you have any knowledge of anyone in possession of, or is using the said Gardenia trays, please contact:

ATTY. MELVIN L. VILLA
VILLA JUDAN AND ASSOCIATES
Unit 605 Richville Corporate Tower, 1107 Alabang-Zapote Rd., Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City 1780
Tel No. (2) 772-5027 / Fax No. (2) 807-3047

FVR on RP education: It's going to get worse

LEAGUE OF CORPORATE FOUNDATIONS
LIST OF MEMBERS

CHAIRPERSON
Ms. Shelley V. Lipat
(Executive Director, Philam Foundation)

TREASURER
Ms. Cheche G. Arao
(Vice President and Executive Director, Philippine Business for Education)

SECRETARY
Dr. Gerardo Martin-Jr.
(Executive Director, Pru Life Insurance Foundation)

AUDITOR
Col. Alejandro T. Tanseco
(Treasurer, SSS)

RESEARCH MONITOR
Ms. Benjamin Ng. Cruzada III
(Vice President and Executive Director, Manila Group Foundation)

TREASURER
Ms. Socorro Cruz-Angeles
(Vice President for Public Affairs, Metrobank Foundation)

PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR
Ms. Rhina Ma. Abad
(Executive Director, DVL Foundation)

CORPORATE SECRETARY
Atty. Marichi Bautista
(President & Executive Director, Synergeia Foundation, Inc.)

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY DIRECTOR
Chair: **Lydia Echauz-Tantoco**
(Executive Director, Ayala Foundation)
Vice Chair: **Ms. Teresa Tantoco**
(EVP, COP Foundation)

ADVISORY BOARD (Living Former Chairpersons)
Antonio S. Borromeo

COMMUNITY HEADS

Arts & Culture (Visayas/Mindanao)
Emerald Ong
(Executive Vice President, Ayala Foundation, USA)
Co-Chair: **Lourdes M. Alonzo**
(President, Philippine Business for Education)

Education (Visayas/Mindanao)
Ma. Cecilia L. Montemayor
(Executive Director, Philippine Business for Education)
Co-Chair: **Zenaida M. Tamesclias**
(President, Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement)

Environment (Visayas/Mindanao)
Lucinda B. Romualdez-Sarmiento
(Vice President, Philippine Business for Education)
Co-Chair: **Leticia L. Lluch**
(Director, Philippine Business for Education)

Environment (Luzon)
Antonio M. Meloto
(Founder, Gawad Kalinga)
Co-Chair: **Eric dela Serna**
(Executive Director, Gawad Kalinga Foundation)

Health (Visayas/Mindanao)
Theodora P. Lipat
(Retired Executive)
Co-Chair: **Josephine G. Fitzson**
(Cardinal Foundation)

Resource and Fundraising (Visayas/Mindanao)
Gilbert Alcid
(Vice President, Philippine Business for Education)
Co-Chair: **Percy M. Cabico**
(Executive Director, Philippine Business for Education)

Communications (Visayas/Mindanao)
Dulce Fuentes-Hechica
(Vice President, Philippine Business for Education)
Co-Chair: **Jessie S. del Mundo**
(PBSP, FGU)

From page A1

"The figures shown by the NSCB did not yet topse the oil and food crisis. And these statistics are maybe six months late in catching up. So it's going to be worse," Ramos said.

He said the increase in population and other factors could make the picture even grimmer.

"We're talking here of access to the cities—teachers, classrooms, school, books, computers. That has been overwhelmed by the oil and food crisis which is happening around the world," he said in an interview after his keynote speech at the 17th Annual Asian Media Information and Communication Conference.

The NSCB said that the country's failure to send more of its children to school had derailed the Arroyo administration's target under the Millennium Development Goals that all Filipino children will have access to education by 2015.

Imagene Ramos, director general of the National Economic and Development Authority, earlier said the rise in the number of out-of-school youths was a result of rising prices of goods and services.

He said that although public schools, which account for some 17 million of the 20 million student population, offer free services, some families still could not afford to send their children to school because of other monetary expenses, including transportation, food, books and other necessities.

Future in jeopardy

In a statement yesterday, Rep. Mat Rosal warned that the increasing number of children deprived of education placed the country's "competitiveness and long-term future in jeopardy."

"If we want to improve our youth's education outcomes and give them a better chance to progress, we can't be in a business as usual mode anymore," he said.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said Monday that his department was well aware of the problem and was focusing on pre-school and nutrition assistance programs to prepare and keep children in school.

Population policy criticized

Ramos also endorsed his criticism of the Arroyo administration's population policy, calling it yet again a betrayal to the Roman Catholic Church. *(Related story on Page A7.)*

"As I've said very clearly, the population policy of this government is flip-flopping because of the unclear pronouncement of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to the Catholic bishops," Ramos said.

Instead of noting the Church's line, Ramos believed the national population policy should be productive, where couples could decide on the number of their children based on their capacity to raise them.

Other Catholic countries

"They (Church leaders) seem to equate natural or artificial means of family planning as prostitution, which is completely wrong with due respect to all of them. Because what we are really trying to promote is the quality of life of the (Filipino) family and of the entire bigger Filipino family of 89 million more that must be necessarily considered in terms of numbers," he said.

Such reality posits urgency as the Philippine population, with all the Church's loud reservations on birth control, has been rising 2.3 percent per year, twice that of the world average. He cited a United Nations study citing population growth in Catholic countries at less than 1 percent.

"So why is that? Well, it's just that the Catholic populations in the likes of Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Austria, Ireland, Mexico are smarter than the Catholics in the Philippines because they listen to themselves. The couples make up their own minds about the quality and therefore the family that they would like to have," Ramos said.

"They don't have to be guided by priests and bishops," he added.

Quality of life

When he was the President, Ramos implemented a population policy compliant with international conventions on managing population increase.

"Population must be on the basis of the exercise of the freedom of conscience of the couple in regard to the quality of life they want for their family. So the quality is what determines the quantity, in the choice to be made by the couple. They must not be dictated upon by any outside influences," he said.

NOT A WALK IN THE PARK A mother and daughter walk by a jeepney terminal in Cubao, Quezon City Monday as fuel price increases as for this year have made life tough in the country, especially for jeepney drivers. RICHARD

NG PILIPINO TIME HERE At Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City, two policemen are ordered to do pushups for coming in late for the briefing of the Civil Disturbance Unit in preparation for the President's State of the Nation Address on July 28.

EXUBERANCE OF YOUTH An image of the Sto. Niño is hoisted up in the air in welcome ritual for the 2,500-strong Filipino delegation to World Youth Day, the largest group from Asia.

THE FAITHFUL FROM AP Filipino pilgrims attend the opening Mass of the six-day World Youth Day on Tuesday in Sydney. The event is expected to draw up to 125,000 international visitors, and will culminate in a Mass said by Pope Benedict XVI before an estimated half a million people in Sydney on July 20.

Pope goes techie, sends daily txts to youths

first page of 3

NONSTOP PRAYERS Behind-the-scenes as the first day of the six-day World Youth Day being held in Sydney, Australia, Pope Benedict XVI (center) with his personal secretary Georg Gaenswein (left) and Msgr. Alfred Xuereb are constantly praying.

within you the Sydney supreme gift: the Spirit of Jesus. JOY!," read the first of the daily texts.

Local telecom giant Telstra has erected eight extra base stations in Sydney in order to handle the thousands of young Catholics from around the world, who could simply text the word Pope to a special number to receive the messages.

Four giant screens have also been set up at major festival venues around the city, including the iconic Sydney Opera House, and pilgrims who sign up will be able to send a message to the digital "prayer wall."

For tech-savvy youth

A different message of inspiration from the Pope would be sent by SMS (short message service) each day, Telstra said, in what is believed to be the first time the Pope has used mobile phone texting to spread the Gospel.

"We wanted to make WYD08 a unique experience by using new ways to connect with today's tech-savvy youth," said event coordinator Bishop Anthony Fisher.

The World Youth Day celebrations has been held to different cities around the globe since 1986 in an attempt to rejuvenate the Catholic Church. Uber-relaxed security (No World, Page A20.)

An opening Mass was due to be said by the leader of Australia's Catholics, Cardinal George Pell, later on Tuesday.

A papal Mass will close the celebration on Sunday at Randwick Racecourse, where another giant "prayer wall" has been erected.

'Annoyance' laws

Also on Tuesday, an Australian court struck down laws banning anyone from causing "annoyance" to people taking part in the Roman Catholic Church's youth festival.

Thursday, handed down on the opening day of the six-day festival, paves the way for activists to hand out condoms and contraceptives, symbolizing backyard abortions—to pilgrims at a demonstration planned for Saturday.

Three federal court judges upheld a challenge to special regulations that made behavior that caused annoyance or inconvenience to participants in the festival punishable by fines up to A$5,500 (US$5,000).

The judges ruled that the regulations limited freedom of speech and were invalid under Australia's constitution, upholding a legal challenge brought by two activists from the Multiple Coalition, a group of gay rights and secular activists.

The coalition is planning a rally on Saturday at which activists said they would wear T-shirts condemning the Pope and hand out condoms and contraceptives to pilgrims taking part in a procession through Sydney.

The soothsayers are meant to symbolize illegal abortions the activists say some Catholics are forced into because the Church disapproves of terminating pregnancies.

Against Pope's policies

"We now have a lot more confidence to take to the streets to condemn Pope Benedict's policies against condom use, against contraception, against homosexuality," said Rachel Evans, one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit.

"We are glad that the court has ruled that we do have the freedom of expression to communicate our political views on Saturday. I see it as an important part of discussion in Australian society," Evans said.

The New South Wales state government introduced the regulations for July only, saying they were the same sort of powers authorities normally exercised to quell potential trouble at big sporting events.

200,000 pilgrims

Sydney Archbishop Cardinal George Pell said the Church had not asked for the special rules, and had no problem with the right to protest legally.

Officials said the festival has attracted more than 200,000 pilgrims from around the world.

The Pontiff does not have any public events until Thursday, when he hosts Sydney Harbor and delivers a major address.

Reports from AFP and AP

malaysiaairlines.com

It's never too late for some shopping!

EVERYDAY Low Fares

from USD 29 Kuala Lumpur

Check out our Malaysia Stopover packages from USD 60.

Fly from Kuala Lumpur to Jakarta / Hong Kong / Singapore

Don't wait. Fly this year.

Travel period: 15 August 08 - 31 March 09.
Booking period: 14 - 27 July 08.

malaysia

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2009

INQUIRER

OPINION

Derailed

THE NORTHRAIL PROJECT IS MEANT TO REVIVE rail service in Northern Luzon and leapfrog it into the 21st century. Never has a modern railway system been more attractive and economically urgent.

But controversy has hounded the project for years, and now the controversy seems to be coming to a head. Yet in recent weeks, the government has banished about trying to do damage control regarding the **EDITORIAL** pullout of Chinese contractors from the project. And it has not satisfactorily explained why the Chinese contractor pulled out.

The new head of Northrail, Edgardo Pamintuan, helped fuel rumors by saying that President Macapagal-Arroyo is looking at bringing in new new financiers, possibly from Kuwait and India. But the Chinese government, through a statement issued by its embassy in Manila, says official support hasn't been withdrawn, adding that the state-owned China National Machinery and Equipment Group (CNMEG) is still working on the project.

If so, why did CNMEG's technical and survey teams leave the country about a month ago? Former Senate President Franklin Drilon claims to have inside information that the Chinese firm, through Zhong Chun, director general of CNMEG's International Engineering Projects, sent a letter to Northrail on June 3, complaining that their company has been unable to carry out "significant construction activities" because Northrail failed to comply with the terms of the contract. He warned that CNMEG "may, without prejudice to the exercise of any other rights or remedies which may be available to it, terminate the contract."

We are familiar with China's style of lending projects in exchange for loans at favorable rates, the Chinese government-tripod project that projects be carried out by Chinese contractors. Now the Chinese contractor, if Drilon is to be believed, is angry that it isn't being paid for services rendered. The pullout of Chinese personnel, then, is meant to add teeth to the company's demand that the terms of the contract be complied with within 30 days and that no remedies to the breaches it has identified be incapacitated in 60 days, or it will terminate the contract.

China lent our government $400 million for the first 64.4-km. segment of Northrail, from Caloocan City to Malolos. Of this amount, the government drew $109 million in 2004. Last May 3, CNMEG-contractor project manager Ben Jones informed Northrail president Jeanette Iluminada Ili (who resigned on June 1) that the contract price had increased by $299.4 million. This was due to an $88.63-million "adjustment" resulting from "significant variations" in the scope and quantity of work, and $210.77 million in the form of additional compensation for extra costs incurred.

Our perennially cash-strapped government, it seems, has been unable to pay the difference, and we can infer that the reason for this is due to a couple of factors. The first is the escalating cost of the relocation of informal settlers along the railway's right-of-way. (The National Housing Authority has already spent about P6 billion to relocate around 20,000 families, but it claims it needs an additional P2 billion to relocate 10,000 more families in Pampanga.) The second is supposed by the alleged cronyism of the CNMEG letter, tinkering with the plans has been going on.

What is less clear is whether the government has the option of drawing on what remains of the loan from the Chinese government, or if the Chinese government has deliberately put it in a tight spot by declining to release further funding, while the contractor, on the other hand, insists that our government pay it now.

Perhaps the Chinese government, irritated over the way its loans and support to the present government have become political issues harmful to Chinese prestige, is also concerned that its loans are being squandered by the "unprofessional greed" of Filipino officials?

The whole Northrail scheme seems to have been open like a rotten fruit, and the Chinese government has little inclination to do our government any favors. The government, faced with a desperate situation of its own making, owes it some clean-with the public. The result is that the opposition senses that something worse's afoot. Then, the administration must fight on two fronts: the opposition and China.

Meanwhile, the construction of a vital project is in jeopardy.

Publisher **Isaac Kabigting**

Editor in Chief **Raffy Gozon-Alejandro**

Managing Editor **Jose Ma. O. Nolasco**

Associate Editor **Rolando O. Olivares**

Associate Editor for Readership **Rosalie A. Gonzalez**

Opinion Editor **Jose V. Abueg**

Associate Editor **Antonio T. Carpio Jr.** | Acting Page-One Editor **Nic B. Pulido**

Chief News Page Desk **Ramon G. Alagaysay**

National Editor **Pinky Lynn D. Bautista-Jr.**

Arts Editor **Juan L. Mercado Jr.**

Editorial Consultant **Armando Doronila**

Chief Photographer **Raul B. Sangalang**

Art & Design Director **Ernesto A. Villareal**

Board of Advisors **Manuel D. Pangilinan**

President **Sandiganbayan Pepito Bautista Jr.**

Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing **Ramon G. Reyes**

Vice President for Marketing **Susan R. Ocampo**

Vice President for Finance **Isaac Rosca S. Cu**

Abuses by majority directors in corporations (2)

THIS IS A CONTINUATION OF JAIME MOSAT-chal's column about the suit of two original stockholders of Manicore Healthcare Corp. against Ramon de Ore (RDO) for diverting them the "right of first refusal" to buy 9 out of 1,000,000 shares, representing 90 percent of total shares of Manicore. Actually, RDO had already sold and accepted the P170 million cash, the selling price of the 120,000 shares, from some plaintiffs, former Sup. Felicito Payumo and former Insurance Commissioner Benjamin Ramos.

Manicore was incorporated in Philippine Healthcare Providers in 2007 with Payumo and Ramos among the stockholders. In 1998, Cigna International Holdings Ltd. invested in Manicore, and together with Philippine Commercial and International Bank (PCIB) held 60 percent of Manicore. PHI is the merger of PCIB and Banco de Oro, the 60 percent passed on to the surviving entity BDO.

On Dec. 3, Payumo and Mateo, together with lawyer Emmanuel Lim Angeles, another stockholder, informed BDO representative Edwin C. Lotte in open letter that they had deposited the required payment to the specified bank account of BDO. They requested immediate execution in their favor of the sale documents, together with the duly endorsed stock certificates. The letter also attached proof of the remittance of P170 million.

In their dismay however, BDO failed to execute the sale documents and to convey to them the shares of stocks. The reason given was that the signing authority, RDO, president Nicolas Tan, was abroad. But when he arrived, the explanation was that the board of directors' approval was to Tan to sign the sale in favor of Antonio Lee, and not for Payumo, Ramos and Atty. Angeles.

On Dec. 10, 2007, the Payumo group sent a formal demand letter to the bank, addressed to Lotte, asking for the sale documents by 11 a.m. the following day.

In reply, Lotte sent the three a letter dated Dec. 11, 2007 saying that 10 other stockholders

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

of Manicore had by a certain Dr. Manicore, asked as of Dec. 11 letter that "this be disqualified from joining the said shares for allegedly violating the 20 stockholders' rights under the Stockholders' Agreement.

Lotte said that because of this, the matter had been referred to senior management and legal counsel for proper action to protect the interest of BDO."

Also on Dec. 11, 2007, the Manicore board of directors held a meeting during which delos Angeles, the corporate secretary, was asked to step out when the discussion turned to "Other Matters" in the agenda.

The board subsequently disqualified the Payumo group without giving in the chance to present its side on voting during the election of Dr. Manicore et al. It was only after delos Angeles was called back to the meeting that he learned of the disqualification. It was then claimed that ownership over the Dhan-ore board remained the 120,000 shares to service Grand Pin-Ao Holdings Corp.

It seems that the 10 stockholders' demand for the disqualification of the Payumo group was groundless in the following allegations:

• "Failure to provide Dhan-ore and the other stockholders with copies of the acceptance notices (of RDO) after receipt of the latter's prescribed period."

• "Collectively and jointly accepting the offer to purchase the Manicore shares by making the checks issuance only accordingly do not constitute valid acceptance in contemplated in the Stockholders' Agreement and sale under domicile September 2007 thereby causing prejudice to the complaining stockholders."

On Dec. 12, 2007, the Payumo group sent a letter to Lotte which pointed out that:

• The Payumo group furnished proof that by Dec. 3, 2007 they "had sent copies of our acceptance notices to you. Manicore and other stockholders entitled to receive such acceptance notice".

• They separately (not jointly) accepted the offer and, in accordance with the Stockholders' Agreement, agreed to divide the 120,000 shares among them, paying the agreed amount on the agreed specified date.

• The Stockholders' Agreement, as well as the sale notice, has no prohibition against the pooling of resources. Nor is there a requirement for each stockholder entitled to the right of first refusal to individually accept the entire 120,000 shares and individually pay the P170 million in cash.

• There is no basis for the claim of Dr. Manicore et al. that their right would be prejudiced in the sale to the Payumo group will not "dilute" their holdings, since Manicore et al. will continue to maintain their shareholdings and percentage of equity in Manicore.

(Significantly, Dr. Manicore et al. did not raise these points when BDO disclosed last Sept. 6, 2007 its intention to sell to Antonio Go all its shares in Manicore.)

The night after, the bank replied again to Atty. Angeles that he had been replaced as corporate secretary. The letter demanded the return of the stock and Transfer Book.

When asked to provide proof of such removal, such as the minutes of the board meeting, Lotte said that was right and applied instead for a new Stock and Transfer Book for the purpose of recording the sale to Go and Pin-Ao Holdings.

Real gem

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I CONFESS I HAD "MIXED FEELINGS" about last Friday under some duress, with my good friend Ishmael Bernal importuning me to watch it with the absolute conviction I would like it. Father do not particularly encourage pleasure-seeking in Mahal, and late afternoons, which are when Imam disposes to human customs are so. Also, time is. As it turned out, I was never gladder to have been accompanied to do something I should have done long ago.

"Himala Ikaw si Elsa!" is the last version of what used to be the TV staple. The TV show stopped airing years ago but its spirit lived on. To go by last Friday's feature, even the flesh is very much alive and kicking. The "kicking" is figurative, the characters dressed up pretty much by the old-fashioned way with frills and fluffs of lace and moving with an air of the unhurriedness as through in a dream. But the "alive" is literally so, making for more for than the concerns of the aging gay idols that got dragged into the Antonio Calloway.

"Himala" has been three years in its near incarnation since the original appeared on screen. It made with 16th more percentage than a people down not just by cast and wire but by cardiovascular and forgetfulness. Even worse than forgiveness is having the wealth and bettering it every—no seven knowings one fresh. That results in the gradual disappearance of the original's drama by the beauty of its songs and the talent of its musicians. As I get reminded again and Friday, that wealth is nothing short of fabulous.

Last Friday's presentation featured 11 other artists which they sang the songs' domain like non-Barrios. Sharon Cuneta, Kuh Ledesma, Miguel Cuaderno, Raul Montesa, Gio Villanueva, Raymund Jasper and Barrage Barrios. It was a succession of coups, with a consecutive deceptive to bring the songs on to. The storyline was known from the songs themselves, directly among the songs. It seemed to be basically a story of two women in competition. It has always been my persuasion. Otherwise, how do you explain the original's cast of actresses from Hollywood and love for a lover, and justifying this on a less allegorical note my DNR best between love for country and love for family which compels them to work abroad. The reasons are pieces somehow missed there.

The rest parts, of course, were the songs and the singing. The songs were both old and new, proving that he is timeless, like "forever" itself, did not die no more and death long ago but Bernstein today like Rosters from the rubble to. Some of the songs were new and sounded, among others. It did help that, a big part of the audiences consisted of Bernal's senior citizens who knew the familiars—"Mulin ng Pang," "Anak Dalita," yes—by heart. They were humming along with the singers or mouthing the words very quietly. I know most of the songs by myself, the older ones than the new ones, and wondered briefly if Bernh did not drag his interviewing I can not to interviewer's end.

To say that I thoroughly enjoyed the show is to say that I thoroughly enjoyed Laotian Noodles. I can't. I have Bernh's concert blues. I could not have been a better reminder particularly in these days when we're being overcome by "American Idol" and its various Filipino imitations that we have a rich musical heritage, which is not just as good as but is often better than the best of them, notably in the latter's pop form. I want to say what our problem has always been performing but it's just manner at it's, our problem has always been composing. Let's just due to it. I have to modify that judgment and say that our problem has not been composing or composition. It has always been appreciating. "American Idol" but Friday amply showed how we do not look for both. In the latter, an intense artistry of our singing and the sublime sophistication of our songs. It's just a question of

seeing—or hearing—that. We're so blinded by glitter we miss out on the gold.

I've always said too that the best song for Filipinos to have a sense of country is to read books—it's an incredible experience. There is no book—it's an incredible experience. I say to Filipinos to have a sense of country is to listen to its songs—it's an incredible experience. I say in least, assure the prospective listener absolutely no and hesitancy compositions are not inferior to Puccini's and Verdi's. You cannot listen to this listen better, sing as capably by our spectacular talents, without feeling your heart swell with pride at being a Filipino. That's one very welcome enlargement of the heart, whether you're a music citizen or not.

I went away from it having one nagging thought: what a shame it is for us to spend big bucks to get people from out up to go on a late afternoon of a Friday to sing Bayan's favorite songs—no impressive school by the way, and our continental that are built especially to educate. What's poor, I thought of what Procesos had done for opera, which is not to make it the most popular thing in the world, many pop singers themselves scrambling to even care to it. Maybe you need a Filipino Procesos to do the same thing for the Filipino music?

But then I also remembered that the opera has always enjoyed much prestige all over the world, whereas the Lambanog has lapsed into, if it has not always been, an object of parody or satire in this country. This is a country where people like to parody operatic in virtue, this is where operatic indulgence is to be had, where people normally indulging in hoping to them they're really English-speakers that one for a sport and to this kind, or tongue, of singing if found in. I remembered. Maybe the loudness, like the size, can put on ears and reduce the Filipino who does not know "Madding Anne" as much as "Der pride manne" into a musical enemy?

Hang in there, maybe someone can do for the carnivals what Ben Lohmann did for "Bonnie and Jolie"?

House backpedals on Sulpicio

ANALYSIS

Armando Doronila

THE CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY INTO THE sinking of Sulpicio Lines' MV Princess of the Stars has inexplicably changed course with the rejection by the House committee on transportation last Monday of the demands by a bloc of its members to expand the scope of the inquiry to include the company's sordid record of sea mishaps in the past 20 years.

The outrage sparked by the publication last Sunday of the authoritative Lloyd's MIU—which reported that the company's Don Juan had figured in 45 sea accidents since 1986—fizzled last Monday when Bayelsa Rep. Monico Puentevella, committee chair, announced that the inquiry would focus on the June 21 sinking of Princess of the Stars.

His announcement splashed cold water on public expectations that the first day of the resumption of the hearings—it was hoped that the hearings would put Sulpicio in the hot seat to determine its culpability in the sinking of its ferry with more than 800 passengers on board off Sibuyan Island at the height of Typhoon "Frank" last June 21.

In limiting the scope of the inquiry solely to the Princess of the Stars sinking, Puentevella not only went against the current of outrage generated by the disclosure of Sulpicio's involvement in several other mishaps aside from the sinking of seven ships. Puentevella narrowed the scope of the inquiry to the congressional coverage by Speaker Prospero Nograles that the inquiry should cover all sea mishaps involving Sulpicio, as well as the threat by fellow Rep. Edcel Lagman, chair of the committee on appropriations, that Congress should cancel Sulpicio's franchise to operate maritime transport. Puentevella's decision ended up demonstrating Sulpicio, saying that "[there must] be an addition on the part [Sulpicio]," referring to Lloyd's summaries of the shipping line's accident record.

Leaving a counter-commentary that expressed by the House leadership and senior members, Puentevella said, "Whether it's 45, 50 or 60, we don't think we should dwell on the past. We should focus on the future and craft laws that would help avoid similar tragedies from occurring."

There could be no quarrel with the fact that committee has tied its own hands. It has deprived itself of the correct object of the Lloyd's report in delving deeper into the causes of the loss of shipping involving Sulpicio vessels, in a vessel that has not been apprehended by other shipping lines in the country. This course would not be available if the inquiry is focused on the Princess of the Stars sinking. The examination of the mishaps in which Sulpicio ships figured in the past 20 years offers material on which to draw in drafting remedial legislation which Puentevella himself said "would help prevent similar tragedies in the future."

Rich material can be drawn on the Lloyd's report which underlined seven sinkings of Sulpicio vessels, including that of the Princess of the Stars. In the most recent disaster, only 30 out of the 865 people on board have been found alive. Aside from the sinking of seven ships, Lloyd's said, Sulpicio vessels on the Lloyd's summary list have rolled all with other ships, six have caught fire, seven have had engine problems and stalled at sea, and 19 have run aground.

The deadliest mishap was the 1987 sinking of MV Doña Paz after it collided with MT Vector. As many as 4,000 people perished in the worst peacetime maritime disaster in history. In all the mishaps where Sulpicio vessels were involved, more than 5,000 people have died. A close examination of how these happened, and how Sulpicio responded to the disasters in terms of compensating the victims and adopting practices that would prevent similar occurrences in the future would be instructive.

By limiting the scope of its inquiry into a solitary accident, the Puentevella committee has slammed the door to an exhaustive inquiry in how the Sulpicio fleet has come to be in such a state. It has excluded from examination aspects of Sulpicio's operations that should enable the committee to determine the penalties to be slapped on the shipping line for deserting thousands; and to determine the all-important question of whether Sulpicio should be permanently barred from transporting human beings and sending them to graves underneath the sea.

In the way the House committee is excluding from examination material offered by an expert of Lloyd's, it is not investigating in aid of legislation but in aid of Sulpicio. It is playing into the hands of Sulpicio and its counsel, who contended that Sulpicio would not seem examined in a public inquiry.

Cebu business organizations, which are apparently heavily in Sulpicio, have been pushing the line that the suspension of its operations has taken a toll on the transport of passengers and cargo. This lobby is based on the claim that Sulpicio vessels carry 40 percent of the inter-island cargo traffic. This lobby seeks to blackmail the public and the authorities to put higher priority on the early resumption of Sulpicio's services even before a thorough inquiry has been completed to determine whether the shipping line can be trusted to transporting human beings and cargo safely across the country.

The public can live without Sulpicio. There are other shipping lines which can fill the vacuum. The public can't accept more mishaps and deaths.

Typhoon RH

EVERY YEAR, THE AUGUST RAINS OF THE HABAGAT Pamhanas are marked by prolonged rainbearer similar to a supertyphoon, lasting for weeks. There are memories of relative calm, but more often it is a raging cacophony, incitement and devastating.

The typhoon is the annual debate over a bill to promote reproductive health in the Philippines, to include family planning. Every year, a group of bold legislators led by Al. bay Rep. Edcel Lagman files a reproductive health bill and each year it fails to pass because of fierce lobbying from conservative Catholics.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

The bill some of the bill in the Act Providing for a National Policy on Reproductive Health, Responsible Parenthood and Population Development, and as Congress prepares to resume sessions on July 28, the conservatives have mounted their battle positions. Expect more fireworks this year, considering that July 25 marks the 40th anniversary of the papal encyclical "Humanae Vitae," which virtually supports family planning but bans "artificial" contraceptives.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, in their latest meeting, had the bill way up on the agenda, overtaking the current economic crisis. At least two bishops have threatened to withhold Communion from the "anti-life politicians," which is tantamount to excommunication.

The latest is really over "RH," which conservatives claim is just a code word for abortion. They work on what is called a slippery slope theory, the idea that allowing something today could lead to big problems in the future. An example would be allowing persons undergoing artificial insemination, and then cloning, to work with marijuana and illegal drugs. In the case of the "RH" debate, conservatives have even opposed family planning, which they claim is tolerance to "anti-life" mentality that will eventually lead to an acceptance, even legalization, of abortion. Some conservatives even go further, saying that there is a "RH-RT" agenda behind RH, which is the destruction of the nuclear family, abortion, total population control and homosexuality.

RH "Typhoons" are raging in different fronts. Besides the national legislature, RH bills have been proposed by several local governments, and several have passed, starting with pioneers like Davao, Pasig, Quezon City, and, most recently, Quezon City. That last bill was challenged by homebuyers, with both pro- and anti-camps aware that Quezon City is the country's largest city and a trend-setter.

In all the battles, the anti-RH activists have called the legislators "abortionists" because that "R" word works up people's emotions. Sadly, this issue of abortion—one that's picked up so well by the mass media because it is hot—is still unresponsive...also are the other important RH issues.

Typhoon RH in the U.S.

Lagman and his RH team may need to talk more about what RH represents, using very concrete examples. I thought I'd start by giving examples from the ongoing US presidential campaign, which is dominating the news media of America. The term itself is rarely used, but many of the debates actually relate to RH. While abortion is the hottest issue, there are other RH issues that have cropped up in the campaign. Last week, both candidates got into trouble with their teams.

For Republican candidate John McCain, it was about pills. Author Carla Portia, one of his campaign managers, had observed: "I've been hearing a lot about birth control. There are many health insurance plans that will cover Viagra but won't cover birth control medication. Those women would like a choice." Later, at a press conference, McCain was asked if he supported the statement. The reporter could finish her question, McCain said he did not want to discuss that issue. The reporter persisted, and revealed that McCain had in fact voted against a law that would have allowed health insurance coverage for contraceptives. He asked if that was still his position.

It was about appropriateness. Instead of groping for words and reporting, Jim claiming he couldn't recall how he had voted in the past, and finally admitting, "I don't have enough sense to give you an informed answer," and then promising to get back to the reporter on that issue. His aides did get back to the press with this strange answer: "The senator supports competition in the healthcare industry."

My son similar examples played out in many parts of the world. In Japan, women's groups battled for almost 30 years to get birth control pills approved. Their victory came shortly after Viagra was introduced. If I remember right, it took the Japanese government six months to approve the drug, and the impotent people rightly complained that if men could get their little blue pill, then they should also get their birth control pills. "Gender" and "choice" are terms you will hear often in relation to RH, and those words also start to resurface as much as "RH" itself.

Barack Obama also found himself in trouble over a gaffe on "RH issue" when, in a Father's Day speech, he appealed to African-American men to recognize their responsibilities "do not end with conception." Too many fathers, he said, were behaving like "boys, rather than men" and many were "AWOL" (meaning in action). The remarks drew criticism within African-American circles, with some saying that one of their leaders, Jesse Jackson, caught responsibility. He thought the microphone was off that Obama was "talking down" to people and that his "nuts" should be cut off, i.e., he should be castrated.

I was surprised with Jackson's remarks because many years ago he had appealed as well for more male responsibility. I don't remember his exact words but more or less it was something like this: "It takes a boy to father, but it takes a man to parent."

Fathering and parenting are gender issues, and the gender issues are at the very heart of RH. Obama's remarks about

Improve atmosphere at Manila Ocean Park

AS THE PHILIPPINES FIRST AND newest tourist attraction, the Manila Ocean Park is a "must" on for everyone.

The Ocean Park is sure crowd-drawer judging from the hordes of people from all walks of life making rendezvous at the gate entrance.

Unfortunately, although still unfinished, the ocean-view falls short of one's expectation. Upon entrance, the level of noise from the crowd of visitors is most irritating and is quite too distracting, baffles it to say, disorder is the order of the day from the entrance to the exit.

The park's management should strictly implement the house rules on the decibel level for the ocean-view visitors.

Let's make the Manila Ocean Park a most pleasant and rewarding experience for everyone, not the other way around.

—PEDRO FUERTES JR.,
4737 Tejeros St.,
Makati City

A fine column one day and a rash letter the next

WHY REFER TO OAS S. PANGALANGAN'S "A profanity attitude against foreigners." (Opinion, 6/15/08) I was heartwarmed by his defense of "the enemy" being a victim of a snooty annoying attitude (truly "outdated, snobbish and unfortunate.") of an overzealous dance of Filipinos. Pangalangan ended his splendid views with these words: "Today I doubt that we should ...fight the more dominant, the most arrogant and most intellectually backward elements of the Filipino elite and their fellow and abroad." Well said.

But wait...the next day in the letters section here comes this (number) Jethro, starting off with these words: "What gives foreigners the idea that they have the right to intervene in local matters or give unsolicited 'advice' to the government?" The nails that because foreigners "have the gold, they think they should rule" and then tries to pin the blame for the Mendiola scars on "the oppressors" who "think they are above the law."

I can't speak for every foreigners in the Philippines, but I'd be willing to bet that most of them have no aspirations to intervene or advise the government. With all due respect, I suggest that the letter-writer read Benjamin Gee's fine column.

—CLIFF SOUESANA, c/o Seaborn,
Sofia Subdivision, Bireondad, South Cotabato

Unjust enrichment thru double collections, etc.

"GSIS (GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE System) binds mandate." (The GSIS can't be relied upon.)

In the GSIS deliberately not recording the remittances and loan payments of its members so it can charge on them interests and surcharges.

My regular policy matured in May 2008. Per the GSIS' tentative computation (dated June 23, 2008), I have a "net cash value of P389,045." But the net proceeds comes down to only P211,570.72 after a deductions of P168,466.28. The bulk of the deduction is supposed to be premiums to activate (personal and government shares), with accumulated interests during back to 1997 and 1998. The deduction also includes unrecorded payments for salary loans. But these premiums and loan payments were fully deducted from my salary and were as well promptly and fully remitted to the GSIS by our office, the Commission on Audit.

The problem here is that after receiving con-

sistent reminders, the GSIS failed or deliberately intentionally did not post/record our remittances. By the time a member presents his matured policy or claims retirement benefits, deductions have been made for unrecorded premiums (as premiums in arrears) and delayed loan payments, with surcharges and accumulated interests, at least. In fact, my claims amounts to (w)ould be because of the accumulating interest that the agency has been charging since 1997. This deliberate non-recording of the premiums and loan payments holds true with other GSIS members.

The GSIS has earned much on this accumulated interest and double collection of premiums and loan payments. Good for those who complain, they may or may not receive a refund. But to those who know nothing or don't complain, the cheques are in effect an exorbitant, onerous and unjust enrichment by the GSIS at the expense of its members.

—REVENCIO B. ENOT,
Mmarmay@yahoo.com.ph

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of issues and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Tapuz and Mercantile Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to (fax) 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Oh my gas!

'Wag kang magulat, tumaas man ang gas, fares namin bumaba pa rin!

(fare + fuel and insurance surcharges + aviation security fee + 12% VAT).

Sale Period: July 10 to 20, 2008 • **Travel Period:** July 22 to October 15, 2008 • **Promo is non-refundable**

ALL-IN DOMESTIC SEAT SALE

Manila to Laoag, Legaspi, Naga, San Jose or Tuguegarao Cebu to Bacolod, Butuan, Cagayan de Oro or Iloilo	₱699 ALL-IN
Manila to Bacolod, Boracay (Caticlan), Cebu, Dumaguete, Iloilo, Kalibo, Puerto Princesa, Roxas, Tacloban or Tagbilaran Cebu to Boracay (Caticlan), Clark, Davao, Puerto Princesa or Zamboanga Davao to Iloilo or Zamboanga	₱999 ALL-IN
Manila to Butuan, Cagayan de Oro, Cotabato, Davao, Dipolog, General Santos or Zamboanga	₱1,499 ALL-IN

BOOK PACKAGED TOURS ONLINE NOW!

Plus affordable ALL-IN packaged tours from Manila with round trip airfare & 3D/2N hotel accommodations to enjoy!

Laoag ₱4,618 · Cebu ₱5,324 · Boracay (Caticlan) ₱5,638
Davao ₱5,658 · Cagayan de Oro ₱7,534 · Tagbilaran ₱10,508

Call (02) 70-15-888 or visit the travel agent nearest you.
NO FINE PRINT HERE!

CEBU PACIFIC AIR.COM

Across the NATION

DENR warns of another toxic cargo

Carcinogenic substance in sunken cargo ship revealed

By Nazer P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONment and Natural Resources (DENR) has raised an alert for possible contamination from the toxic cargo of a ship that sank at the height of Typhoon "Frank" at about the same time that MV Princess of the Stars did.

Lormelyn Claudio, DENR regional executive director, said the cargo ship MS Ocean Papa carried several tons of toluene di-isocyanate (TDI), a carcinogenic toxic substance at the time of its sinking at about noon on June 21.

A DENR-Mimaropa investigator said that 16 metric tons of TDI, placed in 40 drums, were among the cargo of the MS Ocean Papa when it sank near Maestrazo Island, around 5.6 km from the coast of Culuo. The cargo ship was en route to Iloilo City from Manila when it sank due to strong winds and rough seas.

Two of the vessel's crew members, including ship captain Carlo Kho, died, while two others remain missing. Twenty-four crew members were rescued, according to Commodore William Ibbel, Coast Guard Western Visayas district commander.

Culuo, located northwest of Panay Island, is 86 km north of the capital of San Jose, Antique and 88 km south of the capital town of Kalibo in Aklan.

Claudio said the DENR has alerted local government units and residents of Culuo town and neighboring municipalities in Antique against exposure to the TDI cargo.

The Environmental Management Bureau said TDI is a main ingredient in the production of flexible polyurethane foam and is used for other polyurethane applications including synthetic leather, coated fabrics, paints and adhesives. It said the substance is toxic and should be recovered as soon as possible.

"The chemical has long-term carcinogenic effects on humans," said a report of the EMB dated July 3.

TDI, a clear, pale yellow liquid with a sharp, pungent odor, is "extremely toxic from acute (short-term) and chronic (long-term) exposures," according to the US Environmental Protection Agency Technological Transfer Network 90 Toxics website.

It said that acute exposure to high levels of TDI in humans through inhalation results in severe irritation of the skin and eyes and affects the respiratory, gastrointestinal and central nervous systems.

Claudio said the DENR has conducted water tests in the area and there has been no indication so far of fish kills and oil spillage.

She said the substance is "made but not persistent" and would dissolve or evaporate when exposed to air. She said fish would get sick when exposed to it.

The substance is highly poisonous to humans if ingested, she said.

The DENR has advised residents not to open the containers and drums if they are recovered, Claudio said.

Coast Guard divers are trying to locate the two remaining drums loaded with TDI but Ibebel said the nine containing the TDI might have fallen in deeper waters.

He said Coast Guard has recovered 30 cans, mostly containing food products, out of the total cargo of 168, after three were swept ashore.

Ibebel said that, like the MV Princess of the Stars, the MV Ocean Papa was overmanned with its crew outnumbering the usual 40 for ships of its size. He said the vessel was also overloaded with its cargo.

The owner of the cargo ship, Ocean Containers Lines Inc., told the DENR and Coast Guard that it was unaware that one of its container vans carried the TDI.

It said that the substance was brought in from Pasay, Metro by the Wallem Philippines Shipping Inc. and was only marked "Polyether Polyol OP3805."

Claudio said the DENR learned of the nature of the cargo when an inspector of the substance sought permission from the DENR for another shipment because it has no cargo in the MV Ocean Papa.

Ibebel said the shipment of toxic substances, reportedly ingredients for manufacturing, is not illegal but the cargo should have been identified and marked for appropriate handling and storage.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo sprinkles holy water into the sea off the Siloyan shoreline with prisma alon Mayo to honor those who died at the height of Typhoon "Frank."

5 more bodies from sunken ship recovered

ILOILO CITY—FIVE MORE decomposing bodies, believed to be those of victims of the sinking of MV Princess of the Stars, turned up in Semirara and were buried there, the Iloilo Coast Guard reported yesterday.

The bodies were recovered following search and rescue operations in the villages of Pilar and Bonsol towns on Monday said Ensign Jeffrey Collado, Philippine Coast Guard Rizal operations assistant.

The body of an unidentified male and the body of a female wearing white short pants, a pink T-shirt and a white underdress were retrieved in mountain cliff Sitio Sesame village in Pilar town.

Due to their state of decomposition, the bodies were buried at the Imeribith Cemetery in Kansa 39 village, also in Pilar.

On Monday noon, two more unidentified male bodies were retrieved off Sibaga village in Bonsol town. One was dressed in a life jacket from the MV Princess of the Stars, a blue T-shirt with "PO-OM" printed on the back and blue shorts. The two bodies were buried in the village.

In the afternoon, another male body wearing a life jacket from the ill-fated ship, was recovered off the waters of Ogod Village, also in Bonsol. The body was identified as that of Jonathan Gumeng, 42, from Catarman, Iliad. He was also buried in the village.

In the same afternoon, the PNP in Bonsol 11 scattered bodies from different villages in Lipay City and San Jose in Aklay province, in Penaranda Port to Caramoran for provision.

Salpicio Limos had sent the MV Cebu Princess to Penaranda to pick up the bodies being recovered across the Bicol region.

Six of the bodies were female and five were male. They were all wearing life jackets marked "MV Princess of the Stars," except for a male who was wearing a sweatshirt and a body belt. In bearing the Philippine Coast Guard logo.

The body believed to be that of a PCG was handed, was turned over to the nearest funeral parlor for identification, but the rest of the bodies were turned over to the crew of the MV Cebu Princess, still currently docked at the Penaranda port. Jaymore T. Oarnel, *Inquirer Southern Luzon*

PNP starts probe of cop in La Union shabu lab

DAGUPAN CITY—THE ILOCOS regional police has started looking into the possible involvement of a police official in the operations of a "shabu" laboratory that was discovered in Sugcilan, La Union, last week.

Senior Supt. Noli Taliño, La Union police director, said Chief Supt. Romeo Ellemore, regional police director, has created Task Force Shermonbot to investigate why the shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) laboratory was able to operate for more than a year in the farming village of Bermondabe without being noticed by residents.

Ellemore, Magallao and sanitary inspectors and agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) on July 9 seized chemicals and equipment that could produce at least 180,000 kilograms of shabu from an 11-hectare property in that village.

The value of the chemicals was terrible so it would not be difficult for residents to know that something wrong was going on in the place," Taliño said.

He said one of the caretakers, Ernie Pidagsinan, implicated a police official in the raiders in the laboratory's operation.

Chief Supt. Eleazar Matillano, Philippine National Police spokesperson, assured that the PNP would be transparent in its investigation of the police official whom he declined to identify.

"It was just an allegation as we still investigate first. But the police honestly will not condone any wrongdoing of its personnel. If there is evidence against him, he will be subjected to legal and administrative procedures," Barcelona said.

Insp. Joy Ortiales, of the Ilocos police's crime laboratory, said government personnel seized 4,650 kilograms of iodine crystals, 31 barrels of red phosphorus, of 50-kg per barrel; 15 bottles of hydrochloric acid, at five gallons each; five gallons of organic solvent; 46 sacks of caustic soda (sodium hydroxide), at 25 kg per sack; and 60 boxes of ethyl alcohol (each box contains four bottles).

She said police also recovered 42 boxes of "violet crystals" that they cannot identify because the boxes had no labels. A box contained 20 bottles of this chemical.

She said the ingredients, when processed, could yield about 180,000 kilograms of shabu. PNP figures, she said, place the street value of a kilogram of shabu at P6 million.

Taliño said the seized equipment and chemicals were loaded in six trucks.

He said succeeding police operations yielded two more truckloads of chemicals, containers and equipment suspected used in producing shabu.

He said policemen found three other flagging several areas in the compound.

Taliño said the chemicals were turned over to PDEA for safekeeping. Yolanda Rotelle-Fuertes, *Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DOLE Intramuros, 807 Maligaya St. Manila, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATIONS FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMITS (AEP/S)

Name and address of Company/Employer | Name of Foreign National / Citizenship | Position

[illegible]

Director of the Bureau
ATTY. ROMULO L. ESPERANZA
Regional Director

Palace OKs citizens' arms vs illegal logging

'The soonest this is done, the better for the environment'

LUCENA CITY—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo said force protection adversaries have agreed to form a citizens' body to fight continued illegal logging in the Sierra Madre mountain range, the head of a Church-based forest protection watchdog said yesterday.

The move, according to Fr. Peter Montallana, came in the wake of the apparent failure of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and other government agencies to stop illegal logging in the area.

Montallana heads the Task Force Sierra Madre (TFSM).

He said Bishop Rolando Tria Tirona and a delegation from northern Quezon met with Ms Arroyo last month in Malacañang and voiced serious concerns on continued illegal logging in Sierra Madre.

Montallana said the delegation "refused to die President what's really happening in Sierra Madre."

He said logging continued despite the replacement of community environment and natural resources officers in three towns...first, Quezon and Dingalan in Aurora province—from where loggers get access in Sierra Madre.

ATIENZA

During the meeting, he said, Ms Arroyo, Environment Secretary Jesselito Atienza and the delegation agreed to form two Citizens Independent Investigating Teams (CITs) to prevent further logging in the mountains.

One team would be assigned to Quezon and the other to Aurora.

Montallana said he believed that consensus between officials and employees of the DENR and logging syndicates had been a major factor in the continued destruction of the mountains.

Tirona, head of the Prelature of Infanta, also blamed the DENR for the continued destruction of Sierra Madre.

Last week, the TFSM named Atienza and submitted names of nominees to compose the citizens' bodies. The group also asked the DENR chief to empower the investigating teams.

The letter asked Atienza to allow the CIT to investigate and have access to all documents of the DENR based in northern Quezon and Aurora from 2000-2008. It added Atienza to issue documents covering Laguna, Shiel and Nueva Ecija, where illegal logging was also being carried out.

The CIT also wants to have the power to investigate and interview DENR personnel in the areas and other local government official suspected of involvement in illegal logging.

Montallana said they were also grateful that Ms Arroyo ordered the cancellation, as a matter of "public policy" of the controversial 25-year Integrated Forestry Management Agreement (IFMA) of Filipino-based logger Wilson Ng, president of Timberland Resources Inc.

"The soonest this is done, the better for the environment," he said. Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

As prices go up, Cebu Pacific fares go down!

INTERNATIONAL SEAT SALE

Manila to Kuala Lumpur or Kota Kinabalu ₱388

Manila to Bangkok, Guangzhou, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Kaohsiung, Macau, Singapore, Shanghai, Taipei or Xiamen ₱888

Sale Period: July 10 to 20, 2008 • Travel Period: July 22 to October 15, 2008 • Promo is non-refundable

BOOK PACKAGED TOURS ONLINE NOW!

Plus affordable packaged tours from Manila with round trip airfare & 3D/2N hotel accommodations to enjoy!

Bangkok ₱3,975 Kaohsiung ₱4,794 Singapore ₱6,796

Kuala Lumpur ₱7,010 Hong Kong ₱8,102 Macau ₱9,752

International fares and packages are exclusive of applicable fees, taxes and surcharges. Other international packages are also available.

CEBU PACIFIC AIR.COM

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

The case of the Pinoy Dillinger

Ex-toughie turns to law to get life back on track

By Russell Arador
Tarlac City

DURA LEX, SED LEX (THE law is hard but it is still the law).

So lawyer will ever dispute the truth of this principle. But to Basilio "Dillinger" Guevarra, 54, a former convict whose life story became a blockbuster movie in 1990, this sometimes seemingly different meaning.

Born poor on Feb. 29, 1944, in Sitio Sapang Cubuda in Tarlac City, Guevarra learned early on that the law is indeed hard—but only upon his kind, the "wretched of the earth."

"The law is not blind. If it once was, I'm sure it was blind to the truth and the injustices being done in the poor," he says.

If he sounds bitter with the country's legal system, then people do not know the true story behind the bawis about his life.

"Wandering my movie (titled 'Dillinger ng Siyete Pesos' which starred Raymond Bautista), I thought that the only true thing in it was my name; the rest were pure lies," says Guevarra.

But his hands were tied.

"I could not object because I signed a contract that allowed the producer to include additional sequence that would enhance the commercial value of the film," he says.

Tampering

The movie alibi once where he had already decided to pursue his childhood dream of becoming a lawyer and had enrolled at the Manila Law College. He was "too much in need of money to take any objection," he says.

He was supposed to receive P100,000 as royalty but was hoodwinked by a friend who ran away with a chunk of the payment).

Already nonbilious at 34, Guevarra returned to his country pot to the rest of his adventures. And so from Grades 1 to 3, he was always on the top of his class.

One morning, in his final year at the Baro Elementary School in Tarlac City, a classmate wrote on the blackboard "Matatag p—ino. Madaya, masakiman ng salapi."

As classes during the previous afternoon, his teacher had warned him of perpetrating the pun-it-and-run known with a harmless trick.

"I could no longer take the blow and so I pulled out a nail cutter from my chest pocket and threatened her with it," Guevarra says.

Costly mistake

"It was a costly mistake," he says.

The incident would set off a chain of troublesome events, spanning more than a decade that would culminate in his being sentenced to four life terms.

Set to graduate valedictorian, he ended up third on the instigation of his teacher, who filed a complaint against him before the school principal.

"So close valedictorian I would have been able to pursue my secondary education on scholarship, but as things turned out, I had to stop studying," he says.

He packed up and walked 30 km to Angeles City where he slept on sidewalks and worked as a shoeshine boy.

In Angeles, he befriended a United States Air Force captain who owned a Cloth Art Store who offered him a job as a "yard boy" inside the base.

Life went smoothly for a while, but after his American friend left for the US he would once more find himself being accused of a wrongdoing (but would run from the former).

"Two yard boys stole a typewriter from an office inside the camp and my workplace instead of looking for the thieves, the base security arrested me and took me to a nearby Philippine Constabulary detachment where I was tortured into signing a written confession owning up to the crime," Guevarra says.

'Bumbed'

On Sept. 16, 1964, he was detained at the Angeles City jail. He tried to escape but was arrested and sent to the provincial jail in San Fernando, Pampanga.

He tried to escape some but was again caught. In fail a third attempt to break prison, he was chained on both feet and placed in solitary confinement.

Guevarra's five years of prison "symbol" (five-for-all fight) was at the reception and diagnostic center of the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) in Muntinlupa where he was transferred in December 1965.

PACIFICO "Dillinger" Guevarra with wife and three daughters. The face of the children are plastered as per Bayanihan policy of not disclosing their identities to spare them from any stigma or harm that the story may create.

After a month in Muntinlupa, Guevarra and 72 other prisoners were sent to the Sablayan Prison and Penal Farm in Occidental Mindoro, where he witnessed the savagery of "trusted" prisoners upon their own kind.

"Aside from prison officials, the colony was composed of inmates and 'trustee policemen' (prisoners who were given authority to supervise work at the colony)," he says.

At the colony, Guevarra would endure physical and psychological hardships but would also find his place among convicted criminals as the most fearsome of them all.

He says many of his fellow inmates died of tuberculosis as a result of malnutrition and the beating they got.

Throughout his incarceration, he says, prison officials "gave superficial" haircuts during his early years in the colony to reduce the occurrence of tenth cases, he was ready.

"Sometime in May 1966, one of the trustee policemen ordered me to wash clothes (for him). But since I had already been working for four hours straight that day I was already dead tired. He beat me up. I'd rather die fighting than die from the infection, I told myself, so I pulled the bolo tucked in his waist and stabbed and killed him," he says.

The victim's companions surrounded Guevarra who would have been lynched if not for the arrival of prison officials. He was brought before prison authorities to whom he recounted the abuses being committed on inmates of the penal colony.

As punishment, Guevarra was placed on solitary confinement for seven months.

Celebrity

When Guevarra was brought back to the national penitentiary, he was already a "celebrity" having done what no inmate would dare imagine doing.

"I defied the system inside the penal colony in Mindoro by killing a chiefed trustee policeman. That was something one shouldn't do if one wanted to live, but I had no choice," he says.

"Those days were the worst in Mandaluyong, with five-for-alls erupting almost every day for the flimsiest reasons. I had to use my head to survive. I covered my chest with a metal sheet to ward off knife attacks. My enemies were guarded. Word spread that no blinded weapon could penetrate my skin."

To lead the gangs inside the NBP, Guevarra says, one needed to cultivate an image of invincibility.

In those gang wars Guevarra figured prominently. He was, after all, the leader of one of the most fearsome gangs, the Sigue-Sigue Sputnik.

In no time, after he was economically free life terms as a result of the death of four members of a rival group in an attack in 1982, Guevarra would be given the moniker "Dillinger," after American gangster John Herbert Dillinger, who became the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Public Enemy No. 1 in the 1930s.

Turning point

The turning point in Guevarra's life came in 1971 when prison superintendent Melton Geronimo surrended in brokering peace among the warring gangs.

Taking advantage of the reforms being introduced at NBP, Guevarra joined various religious activities. He also sought the help of Msgr. Ernesto Esperidon who facilitated his transfer to the medium security compound.

In 1985, the Department of Education, Culture and Sports, the Rotary Club of Las Piñas and the Perpetual Help College system launch a program for prison inmates who wanted to pursue their college education.

Guevarra took the DECS validation exam for college and passed it.

In 1990, he was released by the Board of Pardons and Parole after 25 years in prison. In 1991, he received his degree in Entrepreneurship from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP).

"But although I was out on parole and already a holder of a college degree, I was not able to land any job in Manila. Employers would say I was ex-con, and an ex-convict," he says.

On the advice of a prison official, Guevarra decided to take up law and sought once more Esperidon's help in enrolling at the Manila Law College.

To make both ends meet as a law student, he rented a bed space and subsisted on 20 pieces of pan de sal every day.

He earned his law degree and was granted absolute pardon by then President Fidel Ramos in 1998 and easier filed his application to take the bar examinations in 1996 and 1997.

The Supreme Court denied both applications in 1997 and 1998 on the ground of moral turpitude.

"When I received my absolute pardon, all of my rights, civil and political, have been restored to me. I do not know why the Supreme Court should take my case against my desire to take the bar," he says.

GUEVARRA when he was in his 20s.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

GMA sticks to Church line

Front page 1

Members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) met with Ms Arroyo last week to voice their opposition to reproductive health bills in Congress on the grounds that these promote abortion.

The Church has termed a bona ache Chastity Awakening Movement (CAM) as a pastoral statement ordering priests in his archdiocese to refuse communion to pro-abortion politicians.

Aliw Rep. Eduardo Zamora, the main proponent of a family planning bill in the House of Representatives, said Arroyo's stance was "completely without basis" because no lawmaker was advocating the legalization of abortion.

Lagman's bill and similar measures include a provision for "mandatory reproductive health and sexuality education" in primary schools, which some of the bishops have frowned upon.

Abortion is illegal in the Philippines, whose entire income Ms Arroyo of contributing to the burgeoning population and cultivating a "culture of death" through the Church's policy of emphasizing natural family planning methods.

Babies at risk

Salceda said that he and Education Secretary Jesli Lapus had "repeatedly" told Arroyo to have a "more aggressive population policy" because the 2.35-per-cent population growth rate "put 2.6 million babies at risk in view of the evolving and intensifying food crisis."

The country's population is projected to reach 90 million this year.

In one of the President's economic advisers, Salceda said he had told Ms Arroyo that one of the most urgent issues was for the government to take "a direct role in slowing population growth."

Besides the risks that babies face, the high population growth rate affects efforts in reducing poverty incidence.

"We've tried to use a more rapid population growth rate in the poor families," the governor said.

He said a burgeoning population affected the provision of social services such as education and health.

Soften stance

Salceda also said that a big part population stood a tremendous impact on the environment which, according to him, has already "reached its carrying capacity."

Asked if he chose his efforts to convince Ms Arroyo to support the reproductive health bill, Salceda and Cabinet members had been individually telling her to endorse her stance.

"We keep on trying in terms of providing policy advice. We never surrender," he said.

Other Christian bishops

The Church may have to contend not only with lawmakers and population control advocates, but also with leaders of various faith organizations on the controversial reproductive health bill in Congress.

Contrary to the Church stand, the Interfaith Partnership for the Promotion of Responsible Parenthood (IPPRP) is backing the approval of the three bill, claiming the legislation would prevent abortion.

"Not all Christian bishops are opposed to the bill," Bishop Efraim Magadia, spokesperson and board member of the IPPRP, said at a press conference.

The IPPRP is a gathering of leaders of various faith-based organizations advocating the approval of a policy on reproductive health, responsible parenthood and population development.

Safer pregnancies

In its statement read by Magbanua, the IPPRP said the Reproductive Health and Responsible Parenthood Bill indicated that abortion was a crime, and sought to prevent abortions.

"[It seeks to provide mothers their right to have safer pregnancies by giving them access to adequate and correct information, and services on reproductive health," it said.

The IPPRP said that Filipinos were suffering from the government's inability to provide basic services.

"While the rapid increase in population is a great threat to the welfare of the nation as a whole, too many babies may be catastrophic for an individual family as these may frustrate the possibility to develop family members to become loving and responsible people of God as well as productive citizens of the country," it said.

While managing the population will not completely alleviate poverty, a national policy on reproductive health will contribute to "a more diverse standard of living" for Filipinos, the group said.

Give couples a choice

Magbanua, sales bishops to the Council of the Christian Bishops of the Philippines, said couples should be given a choice.

"When if a drunken husband comes home [and] wants to do it with his wife? How can you do family planning if there's no condom? That's why we [support] here to our resident merchants that don't lead to abortion," he added.

Bello Rep. Jesnette Garcia maintained that she and other lawmakers pushing for the approval of the bill were not unreasonably advocating abortion.

Separation of Church and State

"We condemn people peddling and counseling women to go into abortion, and that is very specific in section 12 of the bill we have filed," Garcia said at the same hearing.

"We are pro-life; we are pro-quality life," she added.

Limbo also appealed to the Church to allow the lawmakers to exercise "democracy in our reflight" and respect the separation of the Church and the State.

Dr. Sylvia Estrada-Claudio, director of the UP Center for Women Studies and chair of Lihkaan, said the Church act of using religion to intimidate lawmakers was "done to criminal act."

Felipe Medalla, former director general of the National Economic and Development Authority, said the Church should raise the level of debate on the issue.

"We want the debate to be more disinformed. And I regret four questions, and if you answer "No" to those questions, then you should support the bill," he said.

Questions to CBCP

The questions Medalla posed were: Should the government do nothing to help women, especially the poorest and the least educated among them, or plan their families? Should the government do nothing to help women who have unmet needs, be family planning? Do you think that modern contraception such as pills, IUD, vasectomy and condoms are immoral? And, Does promoting these methods promote or increase abortion?

"They have two options: To be unclear, or to be clear and wrong," he said.

Withdraw signature

Fr. Melvin Castro, executive director of the CBCP Commission for Family and Life, said the reproductive health bill would worsen "the laxity of morality" and introduce "the culture of death" in the Philippines.

He said the Church would not deny the lawmakers supporting the House bill Holy Communion. However, he said the CBCP would have the bishops and priests in the areas of the lawmakers talk to them to pull out their support for the proposal.

"We beg you by God's grace to withdraw your signature," Castro said when asked if he had any message to the lawmakers supporting the bill, which has passed the committee level.

Running priest chides bishops for 'selective morality'

FR. ROBERT REYES, A Filipino Catholic priest on mission work in Hong Kong, yesterday chided his fellow prelates for focusing on reproductive health, population and sex issues, accusing them of having "selective morality."

He said the country is facing "more urgent" problems. The sinking of MV Princess of the Stars, corrupt-ridden Lifelogs and corruption, Reyes said the clergy were making a disservice to the country by focusing their energies on a subject that would spur only endless debates.

"But you know as priests, we like one," the so-called "roaming priest" reply said in a telephone interview with the Inquirer.

"I will not argue with the bishops on their insistence on issues [on] but I will caution them about the trap of 'selective morality'" which is strongly biased by individualistic moralities," he said in a statement.

The priest also hit proposals to deny communion to lawmakers perceived to be pro-abortion. He said it was a futile exercise as it would not change the country's situation or the politicians' minds.

"Poverty will still be there," he said. Kristine L. Alave

No closure yet on NBN-ZTE controversy

Front page 1

try to get either Reyes or Abalos to cite the "iconic mole" in the Senate's longest running investigation.

Arroyo vs Cayetano

"He's (Cayetano) just playing into the roll of Malacañang to end the investigation because it wants to torpedo the project. They are trying to protect the President at all cost. But they are barking up the wrong tree, they should just tell Cabinet members to cooperate so the investigation will be completed," Cayetano said.

While the NBN-ZTE case was heard practically at the same time by the Supreme Court and the Senate, Arroyo pointed out that the chamber had yet to conclude with a report after 11 months, while the tribunal had issued two rulings.

The high court upheld former National Economic and Development Authority Director General Romulo Neri's right to invoke executive privilege before junking the NBN deal, while the tribunal had issued two rulings.

The high court upheld former National Economic and Development Authority Director General Romulo Neri's right to invoke executive privilege before junking the NBN deal, while the tribunal had issued two rulings.

The Supreme said that the President had a history of going back on her word (she declared that she would not run in 2004 but she did) and the public needed a formal document, including the contract with Zhariko.

"It might be good for this government has always had problems with ghosts—ghost previous, ghost voters, ghost Cenacosa contracts for "nullifying witness after witness."

"The Senate must be mindful not to be worrisome or remarkable by words, to be trapped in the quicksand of irrelevance," Arroyo said.

"Right now, it's like a petrified mold in a dinner ball waiting to be cleaned in by Speaker De Venecia in his sweet time," Arroyo said in a statement.

Legrodeo court decision

Arroyo said there was little point in pursuing the case since the high court had already rendered "a lopsided, close-out 11-2 decision denying and dismissing the petitions to nullify and annul the ZTE contract" because the President had already informed China's leader of her decision to cancel the ZTE contract to nullify or void the deal.

But Cayetano said that the President had a history of going back on her word (she declared that she would not run in 2004 but she did) and the public needed a formal document, including the contract with Zhariko.

"It might be good for this government has always had problems with ghosts—ghost previous, ghost voters, ghost

CAYETANO

ARROYO

prospects," Cayetano said, referring to claims that Ms Arroyo stole the 2004 presidential election—a charge she has denied.

Cayetano maintained that it was too early to "pass our papers, Sinabuel is not finished."

Deal maker to whistle-blower

The earliest the Senate could come out with its report will be after August when the deadline for De Venecia's appearance expires, Cayetano said. "The hotting will come sooner or later we can't wait for him forever."

"De Venecia will give the whole picture but it will be difficult for him to turn from deal maker into whistle-blower. The tricky part is whether he would want to incriminate himself," Cayetano said.

Should De Venecia get cold feet after attending the Senate, Cayetano said he was banking on Reyes to attend. Also, he said, Reyes declared that his client was willing to testify and De La Torre to provide a deposition if the former police officer was too sick to attend the Senate hearings) to be facilitated by Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Reyes and De la Torre, along with former Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos and cable television executive Lex Ian Miguel, were part of the "Greedy Group" that bolstered the flawed NBN-ZTE contract, according to ZTE witness Dante Madrigal.

Ms Arroyo canceled the NBN-ZTE deal after her husband was implicated in an anomalous activity attempt by Dr. Romulo's namesake son, a hazing bidder. Neri's testimony that Abalos offered him P200 million to approve the deal sparked renewed calls for the President to step aside. Neri later declined to clear up serial demands in the Senate to tell all.

Stephen yesterday said he would ask the Supreme Court to reconsider its decision. He said the tribunal should not have taken Ms Arroyo's word that the project had been canceled. "She has a credibility problem," he told the Inquirer.

Fears of resurrection

Bayan Mura. Rep. Teodoro Casiño earlier raised the possibility of the NBN project being "raised from the dead" through the Department of Transportation and Communications' Infrastructure Project. The project would initially cost P300 million to link 23 agencies, he said.

"My source tell me that since the initial payoffs delivered to the group of Abalos and the First Gentleman have not been returned despite the NBN's cancelation, then the Filipino scoundrels are still expected to deliver their end of the bargain," Casiño said.

If the administration changes its mind and decides to continue with the NBN deal then another case would be filed, said court spokesperson Jose Midas Marquez. "There will be a different set of facts," he said.

Dissenting opinion

Justice Antonio Carpio, in a dissenting opinion, warned that "the ZTE supply contract itself was capable of being rescinded." He also said that the NBN-ZTE deal was void from the beginning for violating the country's Constitution and laws.

"It is axiomatic that one party to a bilateral contract cannot unilaterally declare a contract discontinued or canceled. Clearly, this case is far from being moot," Carpio said.

Justice Conchita Carpio-Morales, also dissenting, said cancellation was "not an excuse for the Court not to decide the petitions on the merits."

Higher rainfall boosts rice output, says agri official

Front page 1

ing, the statement said.

Barzola said the initial data was still subject to review, with the government expecting to release the official first half production data on Aug. 15.

Despite notably rising domestic output, the Philippines is still the world's biggest rice importer as local production falls to keep pace with explosive demand from consumers. Filipinos consume about 20,000 tons of rice daily with many eating it for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Typhoon damage minimal

Typhoons, which hit the country between May and October, are another threat to output.

But the agriculture department remained unmoved yesterday that last month's Typhoon "Frank," which ravaged the key rice-producing provinces of Iloilo, was unlikely to lessen this year's estimated rice output goal of 17.3 million tons, up 0.7 percent from 2007.

"The damage was not too huge, it should not have a big impact on the target this year," Barzola said.

"The typhoon hit right after the monsoon harvest. There are losses on the part of the farmers in terms of investment in seeds and fertilizer but in terms of production, as long as they are able to replant right away, it is not considered a production loss," he said.

With the use of fertilizers doubling domestically to about 91,300,971,800 per bag compared to a year ago, the government has started giving farmers fertilizer subsidies of P250 per bag, particularly in typhoon-ravaged provinces. The agriculture department said to its statement.

Not this year, the Philippines has secured 2.3 million tons of its national staple from overseas sources to fill a gap in local output and is set aside a higher buffer stock after rice prices shot up to record highs earlier this year.

Rice subsidy

At another forum, Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap yesterday said the government had spent P6.6 billion to sell cheap rice to the country's poor in the first half of the year.

The amount represents the direct cost of selling rice at a low price of P18.25 per kilo of rice buying the staple at a higher price in the international market. The amount excludes other miscellaneous and incidental costs in implementing the rice subsidy program.

Yap said the government had sold 14.8 million 30-kilogram bags of rice in the first semester and would be making available an additional 20 million bags in the second semester.

He said the National Food Authority (NFA) would be flooding the market with 5.5 million bags of rice monthly during the last months from July to September.

Alongside cheap rice, the NFA has also been selling low-quality rice priced at P23 and P35 a kilo in a bid to pull down prices of premium and fancy varieties in the retail market.

NFA losses

Earlier, the NFA said it expected to incur this year a total of P18 billion in losses in connection with the rice subsidy program.

The NFA estimated its losses from the subsidy program may reach P6.3 billion in the third quarter and P5.4 billion in the fourth quarter.

The cost projections—drawn hosted by the University of Asia and the Pacific, Yap talked about the government's efforts in helping poor consumers cope with unprecedented spikes in food prices.

"We have been carrying out the three-pronged strategy that involves making sure that the country has adequate rice supply; that rice is properly distributed in the market, and that rice hoarders are arrested and prosecuted," the agriculture secretary said.

Distribution

NFA rice, along with other basic commodities, is distributed and sold through 3,197 Kadiwas in Cavite in Batangas and 8,000 Tindahan Natin outlets, as well as 548 Bigasan sa Barangay and 1,196 rolling stores nationwide.

He added that the agriculture department had also established countrywide network of drop-off points where consumers may buy rice and other basic commodities at affordable prices.

Yap said the NFA had already referred 66 cases of rice hoarding and profiteering to the Department of Justice for prosecution. Reports from Reuters and Amy R. Remo

RP urged to lead efforts to improve workers' conditions overseas

HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS YESTERDAY urged the Philippines to lead efforts to improve working conditions in Saudi Arabia for more than a million foreign women domestic workers.

Nisha Varia of the US-based Human Rights Watch said the Philippines, a major source of foreign workers in the Middle East—could "take a lead role in pushing for reforms" to safeguard them in Saudi Arabia.

Varia said the Philippines and other major sources of labor, like Indonesia and Sri Lanka, would gain more for their citizens if they cooperated in a "multilateral approach" to seek changes in Saudi labor laws to protect foreign maids working in the kingdom.

"They would have great bargaining power if they put up a common front," she said.

Senior officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs were not immediately available for comment.

William Gois, regional coordinator for Migrant Issues in Asia, a support group for overseas workers, said the Philippines was considered a "power broker" among labor-providing countries and should not be afraid of losing out on overseas labor markets by standing up for the rights of workers abroad.

Loud voice

Gois said the Philippines had chosen to could lead human rights causes in international forums, citing the stron UN's loud voice in the 19-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations against abuses by the junta in Burma (Myanmar).

Datu and Gois yesterday spoke at a forum in Manila on the 133-page report released last week by Human Rights Watch on domestic workers in Saudi Arabia.

The report said domestic workers in the Middle East country were often subjected to abuse that in some cases amounted to slavery, as well as sexual violence and beatings.

Rather than receiving justice, domestic workers, nearly Asians, are more likely to face countercharges of "witchcraft," theft or adultery, the report added.

'Unfair, one-sided'

Sohaila Hammad of Saudi Arabia's National Society for Human Rights has dismissed the report as "unfair and one-sided," saying her country has been "unjustly portrayed and the crimes against or by its workers are never mentioned."

Saudi Arabia is home to 3.6 million foreign workers employed in a wide range of industries, including oil, business and engineering.

According to Varia, there are an estimated 600,000 to 900,000 domestic workers from Indonesia, 400,000 from Sri Lanka and about 200,000 from the Philippines in Saudi Arabia.

Those countries should collectively insist on reforming the sponsorship system under which working visas are given to applicants and which allows Saudi employers to control the lives of foreign workers, she said.

Risk of abuse

"In reality, from the very beginning, puts them at the risk of abuse," Varia said.

Compared with other countries, the Philippines has given more protection and has demanded higher wages for its overseas workers, prompting other employers to look to other nations, she said.

"That is why it is so important to have the multilateral cooperation, because if the Philippines improves protection only for Filipino workers, the host countries will just start employing the women from countries with weak protection," Varia said.

Multilateral approach

Victor Fernandez, president of the Philippine Association of Service Exporters Inc., a group of job recruitment agencies, said a multilateral approach to bettering safeguards for overseas workers' welfare was better than seeking bilateral agreements.

He said Saudi Arabia would feel that these countries were "ganging up" and it could "build bigger resistance" to their demands.

"The moment you feel people are ganging up on you, you ask them to leave," he said. AP

NPA rebels attack GMA security in Masbate

From page A1

Ronnie Baloloy said the targets were "government troops" patrolling the area around Placer town to "secure it for the President's visit."

The morning violence forced Cabinet members to abandon their land route and use helicopters, instead, for the meeting with Ms Arroyo at around noon.

Ms Arroyo had a different itinerary and traveled separately from her Cabinet members. She was apparently in no danger at any time.

Ms Arroyo has been overseeing the country visiting areas affected by Typhoon "Frank" and overseeing the distribution of relief goods.

Twin scourge

The fourth-class municipality of Placer, which was hit hard by Frank, lies in an area where New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas operate.

Rebel leaders saw Ms Arroyo's visit as an attempt to underscore her administration's efforts to defeat the twin scourge of insurgency and poverty.

Government troops bustled up security around Placer hours before Ms Arroyo arrived.

The morning clashes prompted the Presidential Security Group to alter the travel plan of the Cabinet, led by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

Dr Cesario and the rest of the Cabinet had been scheduled to travel by land from the Masbate airport in Placer. Concerned about a possible ambush, they were instead flown by six helicopters directly to Cabreo Intermedio Central School here, where the joint meeting of the Cabinet and the National Disaster Coordinating Council was held.

Baloloy told reporters the explosion in Barangay Ban-ao was believed to be the handiwork of the NPA.

"Nobody was hurt although the explosion created a one-fathom crater," Baloloy said. The house nearest to the blast was about 400 meters away, he said.

Lt. Col. Claudio Pasia, commanding officer of the Philippine Army's 9th Infantry Battalion, said the explosion were caused by an improvised explosive device (IED).

Platoon ambushed

Hours after the blast, two firefights occurred.

At around 7:45 a.m., suspected rebels ambushed an Army platoon in Bagacay village, Aroroy, some 50 km northwest of Placer. The soldiers were on a passenger van when they were fired upon. There were no casualties among them, Maj. Christopher Morales said.

Three hours later, two soldiers were killed when armed men fired upon another patrol in Barangay Panicijan in Uson, about 70 km north of Placer.

The ambush occurred on the same road where the Cabinet convoy was to pass.

In the afternoon firefights, two rebel armies were injured in an ambush by suspected NPA guerrillas in Milagros town.

The two were part of the 203rd-named Ferran Geographical Unit (Cafgu) who were providing security for a group conducting a medical mission, military spokesperson Lt. Col. Ricardo Torres Jr. said.

The ambush occurred between 4 and 5 p.m., he said.

Torres said a separate afternoon encounter between soldiers and rebels occurred in Esperanza town but there were no immediate reports on casualties.

A report from Army Capt. Leo Eusebio, spokesperson of the Southern Luzon Command, gave different details, saying the two Cafgu members were wounded in an ambush elsewhere town.

GMA not a target

Reports from residents indicated the rebels could have inflicted casualties in the afternoon clash, Eusebio said.

Lieutenant Colonel Tacor said: "I don't think this was meant to affect the President's visit. These incidents could happen anytime since the NPA is just in the area."

He said the roadside blast in Placer could have been only meant to cause panic and not cause harm. He said the 59th, 9th and 203rd Cafgu battalions hunted the NPA.

Lt. Cmdr. Agnimidis Lieutenant Colonel Torres downplayed the encounters as not related to Ms Arroyo's Masbate visit, saying they were part of the military's "continuing operations" against rebels.

Rep. Rodolfo Fondevilla Lanete of Masbate chastised the NPA was behind the murder of his brother, former provincial board member Jesus Fondevilla, whom she did not name, had submerged preparations for Ms Arroyo's visit, exciting off the town's power supply Monday night.

Placer last bore a foothold of insurgency in Masbate, which has a bloodstained political history replete with the unresolved assassinations of a governor, several mayors and three congressmen.

Before coming to Placer, Ms Arroyo visited Carlobagat City for a Regional Disaster Coordinating Committee meeting and then inaugurated a bridge in Sarahan, Sumac.

From Masbate, she proceeded to Romblon, where she was briefed by health officials on the outbreak of typhoid fever in some areas. She ordered the inclusion of Romblon on the list of provinces placed under a state of calamity. With reports from Nikko Dizon and Alexis Romero in Manila, and Sonny Mallari and Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon

GMA announces another P4B in subsidies to help poor

By Michael Lim Ubac

PLACER, MASBATE—MALACAÑANG is releasing yet another P4 billion in the form of subsidies to indigents to help them cope with soaring food and fuel prices.

Presiding over a joint meeting of the National Disaster Coordinating Council and the Cabinet, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced the release of P2 billion in power subsidy for lifeline users and P2 billion in food for a microfinance program for wives of public transport drivers, including tricycle drivers and conductors.

She also released P500 million for the upgrading of government tertiary hospitals into primary hospitals, another P500 million as cash subsidy for the elderly (P500 each), and P1 billion for relief and rehabilitation in areas ravaged by Typhoon "Frank" in Panay and other islands.

Ms Arroyo said she would be able to continue her defense policy because revenue collections from the expanded value-added tax (VAT) had exceeded the target for April.

She called this windfall from the consumption tax as "Extra ng eVAT (Perks of eVAT)."

Budget Secretary Salvador Enday Jr. said the funds would be released soon.

In May, President Macapagal-Arroyo launched the P2-billion "Patag ng eVAT (Increased Response Generosity to subsidy)" program on the prices of rice and on the market for the poor.

Another P4 billion was equally divided between scholarship programs and students loans for 70,000 poor students.

From page A1

Tropical Storm "Helen" slightly intensified over the Philippine Sea.

Education authorities yesterday suspended classes at both elementary and high school levels in at least 15 provinces as a result of heavy rains and strong winds Helen over central and northern Luzon.

For today, classes in all pre-schools are automatically suspended in areas covered by Signal No. 1, the Department of Education (DepEd) said.

In areas under Signal No. 2, classes from pre-school to high school—both public and private—are suspended, the DepEd said.

Local authorities, on their own, may also suspend classes depending on the weather condition in their respective areas of jurisdiction, according to a DepEd advisory.

8th storm

Helen, the eighth weather disturbance to hit the country, slightly intensified from a tropical depression to a storm, packing maximum winds of 75 kph with gustiness of up to 90 kph.

Aleta Manila will experience occasional rains, the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said.

The storm is expected to make a landfall in Batanes today.

Pagasa issued these Signal No. 2 over Isabela, Cagayan, including Calayan group of islands, Apayao and Batanes.

It warned that winds from 61 kph to 100 kph would hit these provinces and cause moderate damage to agriculture, uproot large trees, and weaved structures and cause houses.

It warned that winds from 61 kph to 100 kph would hit these provinces and cause moderate damage to agriculture, uproot large trees, and weaved structures and cause houses.

Sea travel risky

Pagasa said that travel by all types of sea craft and aircraft in these areas was risky and advised seafarers on the coast to watch out for big waves.

"Areas near the center of the storm will experience continuous moderate to heavy rainfall," Pagasa Director Prisco Nilo said in a phone interview.

Areas Nueva, Mora, Kalinga, Mt. Province, Pagan, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino and Aurora were placed under Signal No. 1.

Winds of from 30 kph to 60 kph could partially unroof tiles and cogon houses, damage rice in flowering stage, and flatten banana plants in these areas, besides making travel by small sea craft risky to avoid.

"Those living in coastal areas should be wary of floods, and those living on mountain slopes should be wary of landslides," Nilo said.

Hovering over the sea

As of 4 p.m. Tuesday, the storm was hovering over the Philippine Sea some 370 km east of Aparri, Cagayan, and was moving west-northwest at 7 kph.

It was forecast to be 140 km northeast of Aparri this morning and 70 km west of Basco, Batanes, tomorrow morning, exiting out of the country by Friday morning toward Taiwan.

"It's expected to intensify because it's hovering over water," Nilo said.

"The whole of Luzon, especially the northwest sections, will experience rainfall because the storm is expected to enhance the southwest monsoon," typhoon forecaster Joel Jesusa said in an earlier interview.

Below spilling level

Education Secretary Jesli A. Lapus announced late Monday night the suspension of classes in Ilocos, Tarlac, Batanes, Bulacan, Pampanga, Pangasinan, La Union, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Abra, Kalinga, Apayao, Cagayan, Isabela, and Batanes.

As of press time, the DepEd had yet to give an update on whether classes would be resumed in some areas.

In Isabela, the water level at Magat dam in Ramon town was recorded at 176.36 meters, still below the 193-meter spilling level, as strong rains spawned by Helen spanned the province.

Edwin Pinero, weather and flood forecasting chief of the National Irrigation Administration-Magat River Integrated Irrigation System, said the agency was not expecting any sudden increase in the reservoir's water level because there had been no strong rains in the province in the past few days despite the storm.

Go to high grounds

Dar Jose Armand Antonio, Isabela chief defense officer, asked villagers living near rivers and low-lying areas to seek higher grounds to avoid floods.

Arnie Trinidad Jr., DepEd director in Cagayan Valley, announced the suspension of classes in elementary and high school in Batanes, Isabela and Cagayan on Wednesday.

Trinidad said school principals in other provinces in Cagayan Valley not covered by storm signals may decide on whether to suspend classes after assessing possible risks to their students.

Roads leading to Baguio City and to the vegetable farms in the region remained open while water levels in Ambuklao and Binga dams in Benguet stayed below their critical levels on Tuesday. Reports from Jerry E. Esplanada in Manila, and Villamor Visaya Jr. and Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Las Piñas, Quezon City boys choirs win golds in Austria

From page A1

The choral festival, a biennial event that formerly took place in Linz in Austria, Bonn in South Korea, Germany and Xiamen in China, is considered the world's largest choral competition. This year, more than 400 choirs from more than 30 nations participated.

The Las Piñas choir is composed of 28 young boys whose age range from 9 to 16 years old. The delegation was headed by Mayo Aileen Vergara, parish priest of St. Joseph's Parish church and school director of the St. Joseph's Academy, where these young boys are enrolled.

Arriving today

Most of the choirs in the Gran competition, except those from China, Russia, Austria and Germany, a big number of delegates were also sent by Indonesia, Hungary and Croatia.

During the competition, the choirs demonstrated their abilities before 71 international jurors. There were more than 600 performances in 26 different categories.

Two-thirds of the participants were children, teenagers and young adults. Other than the young choir competition, other categories were folklore, women's sorts, popular music musicals as well as gospel and spiritual.

The Las Piñas choir will be coming back to Manila today at 12 p.m. A welcome line has been set by the Las Piñas government from the airport to Las Piñas church.

SMART

Buddy

Get the chance to win P500,000 cash! Kaya download na ng **THE DARK KNIGHT™** images and truetones!

text **DARK** to **239** now

Pagdating sa movies, ako ang star dito. Ale na Ale talaga!

Aplus METRO
Editor Peter G. Dipasupil

SHOPPING AROUND FOR THE HOUSING LOAN THAT'S BEST FOR YOU?
Come to BPI Family Savings Bank, the established leader in housing loans for over 20 yrs.
BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK
Your shortcut to tomorrow
Build the Dream

Robbers target pawnshop in Manila

Money transfer branch loses cash to armed men

By Tina G. Santos

THREE MEN TOOK MORE THAN P1 MILLION worth of jewelry and cash from a pawnshop and money transfer branch in Manila yesterday afternoon.

SPO1 Arnulfo Arore of Manila Police District Station 4 said the incident happened at around 2 p.m. in the H. Uteller Pawnshop at the corner of Dimasalang and Nieto Streets in Sampaloc. The establishment also housed a Western Union branch.

The pawnshop security guard, Jimie Penaloza, told the police that a man first entered the establishment and disarmed him. Two other men then went in and tied up pawnshop employees Irene Ison and Leonard Ineresa using packing tape.

Penaloza said the three men ordered him at gunpoint to open the vault which contained P1 million worth of jewelry and P200,000 in cash.

The robbers then escaped on board a white car and a motorcycle.

Investigators said the robbers probably targeted the establishment because it did not have a closed-circuit television camera system.

The incident occurred after robbers broke into the Bank of the Philippine Islands branch on Capitol Hills, Diliman, Quezon City, Sunday night and took an estimated P1 million in cash from the vault.

Police said the robbers accessed the bank by boring a hole in the ceiling directly above the vault.

On Monday, two men and two women robbed an electronic game outlet of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. of P13,000 in cash. They also shot and wounded the establishment's security guard.

FUN INTENDED
Should a boy meet a girl, he can take her via this "invasion" on Sun Rafael Street corner Bank Avenue in Mandaluyong City.

DID YOU KNOW

THE POSH Forbes Park in Makati City was named after William Cameron Forbes, who served as governor general of the Philippines during the American occupation. Forbes was also the grandson of American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson.

CHITO ZULUETA, INQUIRER RESEARCH

"WINNING YOUR BIR TAX AUDIT" SEMINAR
July 30, 2008, 1:00-5:00p.m. Legend Villas, 68 Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City. Topics: Step by step guide to a BIR tax audit; Know your rights & remedies in a BIR tax audit; & Appreciate techniques & tips in handling tax assessment issues. Resource Speaker: Mr. Joel L. Tan-Torres, a tax expert & practitioner with over 20 years of experience working previously as BIR Asst. Commissioner & as a Tax Consultant. To register, call Tinkan Knowledge Center Publishing at 531-2064; 531-8288; 531-0084; CP: 0918-2288777; 0918-2288788. Email: tinkan@pethet.net or tkcp_ph@yahoo.com.
LIMITED SEATS! REGISTER NOW!

INTRODUCING
THE Easiest POSTPAID PLANS FROM SUN...

sun EasyLine
• EASY application
All you need is a valid I.D.
• EASY billing
Billing reminders sent via SMS
• EASY reward
P50
FREE regular load for every early payment*
• EASY on the pocket
P250/mo.
Text Unlimited**
20 mins. daily of Sun-to-Sun calls!***

sun EasyPhone
• EASY application
All you need is a valid I.D.
• EASY billing
Billing reminders sent via SMS
• EASY reward
P100
FREE regular load for every early payment*
• EASY on the pocket
P250/mo.
Text Unlimited**
20 mins. daily of Sun-to-Sun calls!***
Choice of Nokia 1200 for only P1,399

...that give you instant rewards!
VISIT THE SUN SHOP NOW!
www.sunbalance.com.ph Hotline: 395-8000
sun CELLULAR
Better network, better value.

MMDA intensifies drive vs yellow lane violators

By DJ Yap

EVERY DAY, AN AVERAGE OF 181 private motorists are caught using the yellow lane reserved for public utility vehicles, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority said yesterday.

Since the last week of June, some 2,000 violations of the yellow lane policy have been recorded, most of them on Edsa, said MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando, citing figures from the agency's Traffic Enforcement Unit.

"These figures are the result of our strict implementation of traffic rules on our roadways. We will continue our crackdown against erring drivers if they insist on violating our regulations," he said.

Fernando warned drivers of private vehicles to observe the policy, or risk a fine of P150. For the first two offenses, and the possibility of having their driver's license confiscated and arrested for succeeding violations.

"I am appealing to private vehicle drivers to stay away from the yellow lane. If they only follow the policy, we can ensure of faster movements of people, goods and vehicles," he said.

In a statement, the MMDA official said that the agency is more strictly enforcing the yellow lane policy, especially on the Edsa-Kalaniaan-Ayala Edsa stretch by 1.2 million public and private utility vehicles on every given day.

Some 3,500 passenger buses use the yellow lane on a daily basis, he added.

Under the policy, two lanes are for the exclusive use of passenger buses plying Metro Manila while a single lane is set aside for provincial buses. These lanes are clearly marked with a yellow line that serves as a divider between the yellow lane and the remaining lanes intended for private vehicles.

The MMDA has also designated loading and unloading stations at strategic points on Edsa and other major thoroughfares where buses can pick up and unload passengers.

Fernando said the policy is intended to ease the movement of vehicles and free traffic congestion especially during rush hours.

The intensified campaign against yellow lane violators is part of the MMDA's enhanced "Organized Bus Route" scheme.

Former miners suspects in Quezon City bank robbery

By Marlon Ramos

THE THIEVES WHO TOOK more than P1 million from the vault of the Bank of the Philippine Islands branch in Quezon City on Sunday night could be former miners who have close ties to the Masbate Gang, a robbery syndicate, the chief investigator of the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) said yesterday.

Supt. Franklin Ibiosa Mabunay said they received information that members of the Basilio Gang could be behind the break-in at the BPI branch on Capitol Hills Drive, Barangay Old Balara.

Mabunay, chief of the QCPD Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit, said the group is composed of miners who were laid off when several mining firms in Benguet closed down.

He said the group got its name from Basilio Ibiosa, an uncle of Ibiosa, who was arrested for robbery in Masbate province, the home province of some of its members.

"They use their experience in mining to dig into concrete walls and forcibly open safe vaults using everyday tools," he told the Inquirer.

The gang, Mabunay added, is also known as "Sumbrero Gang," whose members are workers—a reference industry slang used in cutting metal—to break in or to cut open the vaults of their target.

The robbers also broke into the BPI branch from a hole in the ceiling directly above the vault. They cut the vault open with an acetylene torch.

Mabunay said they are now looking at the first of gang members who were previously arrested by the police.

He, however, admitted that they might have a hard time solving the incident as nobody actually saw the robbers.

Protesters with paint bombs not welcome in Makati

By DJ Yap

NO MORE SLOGGERS OR paint-on facades of offices of oil firms in Makati City, please.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay yesterday ordered that the police be on the lookout for the offices of oil companies, including Shell and Petron, that were the targets of paint bombs by angry protesters in a span of two weeks.

"While we recognize and respect the right to assemble, we also believe that such right should be exercised responsibly," Binay said, in a directive from Senior Insp. Albert Ignacio, a spokesman of the Makati police.

The mayor added that he "shares the sentiments of the millions who held peaceful, but strong demonstrations over the continuing oil price hikes, but stressed that he frowns on the use of paint bombs."

Binay called up Makati police chief, Senior Supt. Gilbert Cruz, and instructed him to deploy patrol cars and policemen in the offices of the oil firms.

His directive came when filling stations today were ordered to close down because the police thought violence might break out.

Charges

If needed, appropriate charges would be filed against the instigators, Binay told Cruz.

On Tuesday, protesters from Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and allied groups threw plastic bags filled with paint and sprayed protest messages on the facade of the Shell station in Barangay Bel-Air in Makati's Salcedo Village.

Another group from Bayan Muna staged a similar demonstration in front of the Petron building on 6th Floor Ayala Ave. last week.

Leaders of both groups said they wanted to make the oil firms feel the public outcry over the continuing oil price hikes. They also sought the lifting of the expanded valued added tax on petroleum products and the repeal of the oil deregulation law, among other demands.

A SECURITY guard and a Shell employee inspect the damage caused by members of a militant group who staged a rally on Monday in front of the oil firm's office in Makati City to protest rising fuel prices.
(MARIA A.)

Lost your laptop? Try looking for it on Net

By Nancy C. Carvajal

PEOPLE WHO LOST THEIR LAPTOP computers or cell phones to thieves should check sites on the Internet that offer secondhand electronic equipment.

Michael Ancilla, a marketing manager, did just that and found out that the Dell laptop computer which was stolen from him in a taxi June. City assistant on Tuesday, was being offered for sale by a person with the alias "tsatsacio." The computer had been stolen just a day before.

Ancilla said he immediately contacted the seller, who turned out to be Mark Cotoco, 26, of Lores Lane, Manila. They later met in a coffee shop in a mall in Makati City on Friday.

"The moment I saw the laptop, I immediately knew it was mine because of a scratch on its surface," he added.

"It cost me more than P25,000 because of additional accessories but Cotoco was selling it to me for P15,000," Ancilla said.

With the help of the mall's security men, he said they apprehended the suspect and brought him to the nearest police station.

Eamona Police Director Chief Director Chief Supt. Nilo de la Cruz, who's Sr. said Cotoco led to the discovery of the existence of an organized syndicate buying stolen notebook and selling them on the Internet.

Senior Supt. Edwardo Villaos, head of the EPD District Investigation and Detective Management Division, however, could not verify the interview of these two men. The suspect was ordered released on bloodier by a prosecutor "for formal investigation."

METROBRIEFS

2 injured in accident on expressway

TWO PERSONS were injured when the owner-type jeep they were riding in crashed into a concrete barrier on the South Luzon Expressway before noon yesterday. The Toyota Toll Management Corp. said the accident happened in front of the Columbian Autoliner building on the southbound lane. Jeepney Rodriguez driving the jeepney with plate number SJL 232 when the vehicle crashed into a concrete barrier at around 2 a.m. The impact turned the jeepney into a twisted heap of metal. Rocha and his still unidentified passenger were brought to the South Superhighway Medical Center for treatment. Authorities are still investigating what caused Rocha to crash his vehicle into the barrier.

Julie M. Aurelio

Fake light switches, outlet boxes seized

AGENTS of the National Bureau of Investigation have seized thousands of fake electrical switches and outlet boxes during an intensive search on several establishments in Tondo and Binondo, Manila. Raided on Friday were Blessing Things Electrical Merchandise, Lucena Electrical Trading, Concept Generic Merchandise and BT Key Sales General Merchandise, all located in the Ilaw District on Ilaw St., Cabo Street, Tondo. At least with search warrants issued by Manila Regional Trial Court Judges Antonio Eugenio Jr. and Ana Lupay, NBI agents also raided the Goldstars General Merchandise and two stalls inside the 168 Shopping Mall on Ilaw Street, Binondo. Seized from the establishments were P130,000 worth of electrical switches and outlet boxes bearing the "Sakura & Device" trademark. Lawyer Ellen Blancaflor, chief of the NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division, said the raid was prompted by complaints filed by Hermana Trang, owner registrant of the "Sakura & Device" trademark. The owners of the raided establishments have charges of violating Republic Act 8293 (Intellectual Property Code). Ben Nill said.

Tina G. Santos

Binay reelected BSP president

MAKATI Mayor Jejomar C. Binay was reelected national president of the Boy Scouts of the Philippines in a board meeting held Saturday at the BSP National Office. The post is the second highest in the BSP hierarchy following Chief Scout which is held by President Macapagal-Arroyo. Binay first became BSP national president in 1984. Apart from Binay, also elected were Makati Vice Mayor Ernesto D. Mercado, senior vice presidents Rep. Edcel C. Lagman and Rep. Jose Antonio R. Salceda; vice presidents Lauro Bay Fernandez L. Padilla, vice president for Visayas and Alan D. Zubiaga, vice president for Mindanao. Ernesto B. Lagdameo was reelected national treasurer while J. Miguel de Jesus and Edie C. Gervero were voted chief national executive and national commissioner, respectively. Appointed to different posts were Evelina M. Vicencio, national training commissioner; Pepito M. Garcia, national program commissioner; Maximino J. Linsangan Jr., national public relations commissioner; and Salvador N. Panginban, assistant national treasurer.

4 branches of gov't bank in Pasay have no CCTV cams

By Julie M. Aurelio

THREE MONTHS AFTER AN ordinance was passed requiring all banks in Pasay City to install security cameras in their premises, only five banks have yet to comply with the requirement.

Duties found this out during an inspection of all banks under their jurisdiction last week. Pasay police chief Senior Supt. Marcelo Valerio said in his report to Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad.

Four of the five banks were named by the government. The Landbank branches on F. B. Harrison Street, Taft Avenue, the Finance building on Villanueva Avenue and on Edsa Road. The fifth bank is the Construction Bank on Monlunzo Street.

"Grossest managers of these banks which have not complied with the requirements of the city ordinance were actually advised to [do so] immediately," Valerio added.

Of the 74 banks in the city, 69 have already installed a closed-circuit television camera system within their premises in compliance with a city ordinance approved in April.

The ordinance also directs banks to preserve their video footage for at least a year.

Those who fail to comply with the requirement face a fine of P1,000 for each day they operate without a CCTV camera.

They will also pay a P5,000 fine if they do not keep their video recordings for at least a year or fail to submit these to the police during an investigation.

The ordinance was passed by the City Council after a series of robbery involving not only banks but customers who had just withdrawn huge amounts of money.

Councilor to file raps vs Manila cops

By Tina G. Santos

MANILA COUNCILOR DENNIS ALCORIZA will file charges against the policemen who dispersed a group of militant protesting the city government's takeover of a slaughterhouse the other day.

"We're still preparing the necessary documents but definitely, we'll file criminal and administrative charges against the policemen concerned, hopefully this week," said Alcoriza, whose family owns Emdee Ilaya Inc. that used to operate the Vitas Slaughterhouse in Tondo, Manila.

A scuffle between policemen and the protesters led to the arrest of seven men, two of whom sustained injuries. They were later charged with illegal assembly.

On Monday, about 400 employees and supporters of Dreilon held a rally in the Bonifacio Shrine beside City Hall. Trouble started when the rallyers tried to march to City Hall but were stopped by around 200 policemen.

Twenty-four of Manila's 36 councilors yesterday resigned from their respective committees to show their support for Alcoriza, who was forcibly carried out of the slaughterhouse by policemen last Friday after he refused to leave the premises.

The City Council, however, reorganized and elected a new set of committee chairs before the session ended.

The city government took over the slaughterhouse last week, saying Dreilon's rental renewal permission is in contract.

SMART

Buddy

ALLCALLS 20

Ang **P2** mo, may **1 minute** na dito.
Di gaya ng iba pasegu-segundo lang, lugi ka!

Dahil dito, ang **P20** may **10-minute** worth of calls na pwedeng ganiting tuloy-tuloy o pamisu-minuto.
May 5 free texts pa!*

Pwede mong i-load
o i-register: **Text 20 to 909 anytime**

At para sa mas tuloy-tuloy na kuwentuhan, may

ALLCALLS100

for minutes worth of calls
FREE 30 texts*
Good for five (5) days
To register: Text 100 to 909

Angat ako D2! Ma-na-Me talaga!

www.smart.com.ph

The WORLD

Warrant of arrest issued vs Malaysia's Anwar

ANWAR Ibrahim

KUALA LUMPUR—MALAYSIAN POLICE ISSUED AN arrest warrant on Tuesday for opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim in connection with a sodomy accusation by a former male aide, his lawyer said.

Ground Sunken Hair said police told him Anwar was formally "a suspect" in the case and feared him a letter asking the politician to appear at a police station for questioning before Wednesday at 2 p.m.

"No arrest warrant on your client has been issued," said the letter, signed by investigating officer Jude Pereira. Nair distributed copies of the letter to a news conference held in Anwar's house, where himself did not attend.

The sodomy accusation, under law inside by a male aide, injected excitement into politics in Malaysia's politics, which was already in turmoil. It helped slow down Anwar's campaign to topple the government, which suffered badly in the hands of his three-party People's Alliance in the March 8 general elections.

The ruling National Front coalition, which has traditionally enjoyed a two-thirds majority, now has only a 30-seat advantage over the opposition.

Anwar has dismissed the sodomy allegation as a political conspiracy to prevent him from bringing down the government with parliamentary defections. He has yet to officially comment on the accusation.

"I am expecting him to be arrested tomorrow but I don't discount him being arrested earlier," Nair told reporters.

Police Criminal Investigation Department chief Mohamad Bakri from warned authorities will take "necessary action" if Anwar does not present himself for questioning before the deadline.

Anwar will abide by the police order and is prepared for the arrest, Nair said. He can be held in custody for up to 14 days, after which he must be charged. Sodomy is a nonbailable offense, punishable by up to 20 years in jail.

The arrest warrant comes ahead of Anwar's unprecedented live television debate later Sunday with a Cabinet minister over the government's unpopular fuel price rises. AP

World Youth Day festival opens in Sydney

SYDNEY—TENS OF THOUSANDS of Catholic pilgrims from around the world converged onto the waterfront of Sydney's famous harbor on Tuesday, waving flags of their home countries and singing as they awaited a Mass opening the World Youth Day festival.

Pope Benedict XVI arrived on Wednesday, and was resting at a secluded retreat on the outskirts of Sydney until Thursday when he starts a busy round of meetings, rides a cruise on Sydney Harbor and addresses the pilgrims. The festival culminates with a papal Mass on Sunday.

Aboriginal Australians in traditional clothing and white body paint danced and chanted to the unique strains of a didgeridoo in a welcoming ceremony at Barangaroo, along the harbor.

"I know my there is no place for faith in the 21st century. I say they are wrong," Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said to cheers from the pilgrims, most dressed in World Youth Day's bright yellow and red colors.

"You are welcome guests in our land. May each of you be enriched by your time here among us in Australia. Just as you enrich Australia by your time here with us," he said.

Rudd welcomed the pilgrims in various languages, including Korean, Filipino and Bahasa Indonesian.

Cardinal George Pell, the archbishop of Sydney, urged the pilgrims to keep and spread the faith through self-discipline and prayer in a homily before thousands. He also referred to the distance they had traveled.

"Many of you have traveled such a long way that you may believe that you have arrived, indeed at the ends of the Earth," Pell said, the sea setting behind him. "If so, that's good, for our Lord told his five Apostles that they would be his witnesses in Jerusalem and to the ends of the Earth."

Nearly 250,000 people have registered for World Youth Day, more than half of them from overseas. Thousands of young people were staying in churches and school houses or in volunteers' homes, and were visible throughout the city, hosting their official yellow, red and orange backpacks.

The six-day celebration began at midnight, when a giant countdown clock inked over to read "GDay Pilgrims"—Good Day, Pilgrims—drawing wild cheers from the people who gathered at St. Mary's Cathedral. AP

Genocide charges filed vs Sudan's president

THE HAGUE—THE INTERNATIONAL Criminal Court's (ICC) prosecutor charged Sudan's president on Monday with masterminding a campaign of genocide in Darfur killing 35,000 people and persecuting 2.5 million refugees.

ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo asked the court for an arrest warrant for President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, the most senior figure pursued by the court since it was set up in 2002.

Bashir is the first sitting head of state charged by an international court since Liberia's Charles Taylor and Yugoslavia's Slobodan Milosevic.

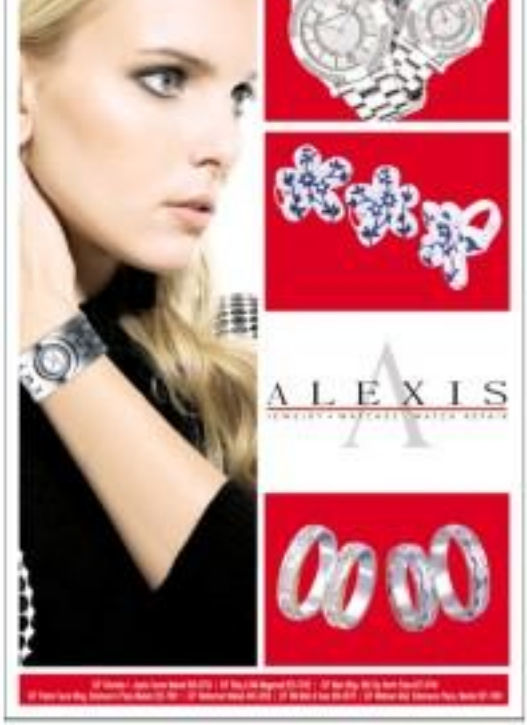
The Sudanese leader dismissed the charges and said the ICC had no jurisdiction in Sudan.

"Whoever has visited Darfur, met officials and discussed daily problems and tribes ... will know that all of these things are lies," he said in statements carried on state TV.

Bashir will seek support from allies such as China and Russia to get the UN Security Council—which asked the ICC to investigate crimes in Darfur in 2005—to block any warrant.

China declined to comment on the case, which arises at a bad time for Khartoum's biggest arms supplier and a major investor in its oil industry just weeks before the Beijing Olympics.

Moreno-Ocampo said on top of the three-week killing by Sudan's armed forces and the militia they suppress, 2.5 million others were subjected to a campaign of rape, hunger and fear" by refugee camps where he said genocide continued "under our eyes." Reuters



THE COVER of the July 21 issue of The New Yorker magazine, entitled "The Politics of Fear," by artist Barry Blitt featuring Barack Obama and his wife Michelle

Satirical mag cover of Obama stirs outrage

NEW YORK—A SATIRICAL NEW YORKER magazine cover cartoon depicting Barack Obama and his wife as flag burning, fist bumping radicals drew outrage from the Democratic presidential candidate's campaign as it appeared on newsstands on Monday.

The illustration, titled "The Politics of Fear" and drawn by Barry Blitt, depicts Obama wearing Muslim clothing—sandals, a robe and turban—while fist bumping his wife, Michelle, who has an Afro hairstyle and wears an ammunition belt strung over her shoulder and is dressed in camouflage. A flag burns in a fireplace behind them in the White House Oval Office in they exchange a fist bump, the silhouettes are greeting their used courage the night Obama shocked the Democratic nomination. A flag burns and has initial refused to it up a possible "terrorist fist jab." A portrait of Osama bin Laden hangs above the fireplace.

The cartoon, which Obama's campaign said was "tasteless and offensive," is not explained inside the magazine. The issue, dated July 21, also contains a 15,000-word story about Obama's political education and early years in Chicago.

The cartoonist's previous covers include a drawing of President George W. Bush and his inner circle floating up to their elbows in water inside the Oval Office, for an issue published just after Hurricane Katrina ravaged New Orleans.

In a statement, the magazine said the cover combines "fantastical images about the Obamas and draws them for the obvious distortions they are."

"The burning flag, the nationalist radical and Islamic outfits, the fist bump, the portrait on the wall? All of these elements are raised or associated," it said.

Obama, who is Christian, has long fought rumors that he is secretly a Muslim. He adds has endured his own attacks, including ones that claimed there was videotape of him embracing "whitey" from a church pastor. The Obama campaign says there is no such tape because the events spoke as to Church.

The magazine said satire is part of what it does "to hold up a mirror to pretentions, the hateful, and the absurd. And that's the spirit of this cover."

New Yorker editor David Remnick told the Huffington Post website that the cover was drawn because it had something to say. AP

WorldBriefs

Suicide bombers kill 23 in Iraq

BAGHDAD—Two suicide bombers killed 23 people and wounded 68 at a recruitment center for the Iraqi army north of Baghdad on Tuesday, an Iraqi security source said, just days after the government promised a crackdown in the area. The security source said most of those killed were recruits. The US military said 16 recruits were killed and 30 wounded when the bombers blew themselves apart a queue outside a security base in Baquba, 60 km northeast of Baghdad. Reuters

Nelson Mandela turns 90

JOHANNESBURG—Nelson Mandela, the hero of the struggle against apartheid and South Africa's first black president, turns 90 on Friday amid an avalanche of birthday wishes for the world's best-loved statesman. Friday's celebrations, however, will be a private affair, with Mandela and his third wife Graca also marking the 10th anniversary of their wedding with friends and family in his childhood homestead of Qunu in the Eastern Cape. "For his actual birthday, it is a private celebration. He is going to be in the Transkei celebrating with families and friends," said Sahm Venter, a spokesperson for Mandela's foundation. AFP

1 million on US terrorist watch list

WASHINGTON—A watch list of suspected and known terrorists, compiled by the US authorities, has ballooned and contains more than one million names, the American Civil Liberties Union said on Monday. The ACLU said it obtained the figure from a Justice Department report on the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center, which consolidates terrorist watch list information. The Center "has over 100,000 names in its database as of December 2007 and that this list was growing by an average of over 20,000 records per month," according to a report by the Justice Department Inspector General, the rights group said. AFP

86 indicted in Turkey coup plot

ISTANBUL—Eighty-six people were indicted on charges of plotting the violent overthrow of Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan's government, which is accused by militant secularists of Islamist subversion. Some opponents of the government, which denies any secret Islamist agenda, call the controversial coup case revenge for court moves to outlaw the ruling AK Party and ban its chief, Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul from party politics. Reuters

Black-and-blue Evans puts on yellow jersey /A27

WHAT'S INSIDE

SPORTS

Editor Tobbyboi S. Melendres Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

22 days to the 29th Summer Olympics Beijing 2008

STA. LUCIA'S Rudy Williams tries to turn through the defense of Gimbora's Sunday Salvacion in their Game 1 duel.

Kings, Masters go for the kill

By Marang R. Castillo

ANTIPOLO—AGAINST A TEAM THAT also doesn't know the word quit, Barangay Ginebra coach Ato Ulchico knows that a Jackson Hands alone won't get the job done.

"We need to come out and match their intensity if we want to get this over with," Ulchico said after surviving a late Sta. Lucia surge to secure a 1-0 lead over the Realtors in their Smart Piatra Cup quarterfinal playoffs Sunday night.

"We also need to play defense as hard as they do."

Ginebra takes the first of its two chances to close out the dangerous Realtors in the 9:30 p.m. game at the Ynares Center (upstairs) after avoiding the near-done diaree they got in the series opener on Sunday where Sta. Lucia almost pulled it off in the last minute.

The Gin Kings trailed by 13 points early and needed to flash their trademark come-from-behind style in the third period before breaking free for a 18-point lead heading into the fourth quarter.

But complacency almost stirred in as Kelly Williams almost turned the game around.

More than holding off Williams in the stretch, Ulchico believes that a good start, unlike what they had on Sunday, could be the key to snapping up the first of three wins.

Mark Caguioa and Jay-Jay Helterbrand have been the most consistent heads for Ginebra, who admitted that he will call on the two more often, with Arnold Vidal out for the rest of the season due to a dislocated left ankle.

The winner of this series advances against Red Bull to a best-of-seven semifinal.

Meanwhile, squad Magnolia also seeks to advance when it battles Coca-Cola at 7:30 p.m.

The Beverage Masters will be coming into the game with their confidence on a high, especially after holding down the prolific and intimidating Jason Dixon to his worst 19th game of six points and seven rebounds.

BUILT FORD TOUGH

Box rails and underrail bedliner

Sporty roof rails

Rear underbar with reverse sensors

Join the elite few for only P1,030,000.* The Ford Ranger WildTrak limited edition has arrived with side steps, sporty roof rails, body claddings, sports bar, decals, rear underbar with reverse sensors, box rails and underrail bedliner.

Call 889-FORD (3673) and be one of its 100 owners.

ford.com.ph

Ford Make Every Day Exciting

Giving your car a regular tune-up saves on gas. Mag-EnerTripid!

EnerTripid

WBC tells Pacquiao: Give up 1 of 2 titles

By Ray Lucero

MANNY PACQUIAO WILL NO LONGER BE A two-division champion by July 28.

And chances are, the Filipino superstar will relinquish his World Boxing Council super featherweight crown in favor of his newly won WBC light welterweight title.

This developed after the WBC Board of Governors, headed by president Jose Sulaiman of Mexico, ordered Pacquiao to choose between his two championship belts on or before the said date.

Despite his stoppage as a lightweight and said he had to starve himself to make weight and snatch the 126 lb championship from Juan Manuel Marquez on March 14 in Las Vegas.

Even celebrated trainer Freddie Roach believes Pacquiao's body is still growing and it can no longer endure being squeezed back to 130 lb.

In another ruling, the WBC declared the Humberto Soto-Francisco Lorenzo bout in the featherweight division Zone results a "no-contest."

The WBC also slapped a $2,000 fine on Lorenzo, of the Dominican Republic, for "unethical and false pronouncements."

Soto was on the verge of knocking out Lorenzo in the fourth round when one of his blows landed at the back of Lorenzo's head.

Wounded and confused, Lorenzo pretended to be hurt and did not rise, prompting referee Joe Cortez to disqualify Soto after consulting with officials of the Nevada State Athletic Commission.

This did not go well with the WBC, which pushed the ruling and ordered a thorough review of the fight tape.

Soto is being blamed about as Pacquiao's likely opponent on October 25 in the UFC. It's obvious due to delays in Westwerden Erwin Edens's medical clearance to fight in Las Vegas.

Due to several cuts and the broken nose he sustained against Soto, Lorenzo will not be allowed to fight by the WBC until Dec. 26.

Meanwhile, the Nevada State Athletic Commission barred Bin Pacquiao-Diaz showdown drew 15,800 paying patrons and tilted in $3,258,750 in the gates. It also reportedly drew about 250,000 pay-per-view buys in the United States and Canada.

PACQUIAO

ILLAM batters off to World Series

Filipinos find inspiration in national flag, literally

By Cordell P. Tapao

ON A SUNNY AUGUST MORNING LAST year, the Junior League batters from the Iloilo Little League Association of Manila (ILLAM) planted the Philippine flag for the first time on their stage. Park, formally rendering the country's place in the Junior League Baseball World Series in Taylor, Michigan.

The moment was witnessed by hundreds of Filipinos who flocked to the event and cheered on the boys from Manila, who finished a fighting second in an elite field of 10 teams from around the world.

Last year's ceremony was a very, very proud moment for the country and the players and Cobb clubs served as an inspiration for their team, said Cathy Vargas Ong, who managed the Junior League team that lost to Hawaii in the 2007 finals. It was the best finish by any team from the Asia-Pacific in the 27-year history of the tournament.

The ceremony was brief but its significance has transcended time, serving as an inspiration to players of two ILLAM teams that will play in the World Series in Taylor, Michigan, and the Senior League event in Bangor, Maine, next month.

Although the Philippines is a prominent figure in the baseball World Series, this year marks the first time that the country will have two teams entered in two baseball World Series tournaments.

Returning to the world stage was no walk in the park for the ILLAM batters. They were pushed to the limit by two teams from host Taylor in the Little League playoffs before finally this month. And Ong said the teams' experiences and disciplines pulled them through.

Ong is appealing for financial support for the training expenses of the two teams in preparation for the Junior and Senior League World Series.

"For most, it's the parents of the players who are spending for the training of the team and their expenses in general to Saipan," said Ong, who thanked GTM and Phoenix Innerwear for helping out the Senior League team. "We are looking for more sponsors."

THE proud division of ILLAM put their hands together before their title game against host Saipan, which they beat, 7-6.

Knights gun for No. 4 vs Stags

EXPECT A TOUGH AND TIGHTLY contested battle today when Letran tries to regain the lead against San Sebastian in the men's basketball tournament of the 84th NCAA season at the Ginoo Antonio Gymnasium.

The Knights, riding high on a three-game winning streak, are the solid favorites to prevail in the 2 p.m. duel with the Stags, who fell to 1-2 following an 84-69 setback last to San Beda on Monday.

The Stags' fighting performance against the defending champion Lions, though, made also cautious.

"They are one of the top teams in the tournament," Alas said of the Stags, who defeated Letran's recruits in the eliminations in their three losses.

"I will be a defensive game for sure, but the main concern is how to limit their transition and fastbreak points and how to contain their shooters particularly Libo Vinoya, Dimbel Aquino, Raymond Maunahan and Jhaps Kemeruela."

A fourth straight win will enable the Knights to move ahead of the Red Lions, who share the same 3-0 card.

"We have to break and attack their trapping defense," said San Sebastian coach Boyet Gallardo, whose team was cause at the expense of Jose Rizal University, 61-56, last week.

Meanwhile, a well-rested Jose Rizal squad and slumping Perpetual Help gun for their second wins when they clash in the second game at 4 p.m.

Nine guard RJ Jazul, the league's leading scorer with 25.3, is expected to spearhead the Knights' attack.

Cordell P. Tapao

STANDINGS	W	L
[illegible]	3	0
Letran	3	0
Mapua	2	1
JRU	2	1
San Sebastian	1	2
[illegible]	1	2
[illegible]	1	2
Perpetual	0	3
[illegible]	0	3

GAMES TODAY
(Ginoo Antonio Gymnasium)
2 p.m. — Letran vs. San Sebastian
4 p.m. — Jose Rizal vs. Perpetual
6 p.m. — Mapua vs. JRU

SPORTSWATCH

Checkmate classes slated

THE MILO CHECKMATE TAKESSAN ONE clinic is scheduled this Saturday, July 19, at the Greenhills Riverside Mandaluyong. Registration will run July 17 while the Tuesday-only clinics at Wilkinson Christ Kindergarten in Bonifacio, Quezon City, ends on July 29.

The clinics are open to players ages 5 to 14 years old. For inquiries, call 894-5700 or 0918-912-1088.

Pasay derby round 2 today

THE CHILL BETWEEN SOME OF THE country's top golfers resumes today with the second round elimination of the Pasay City Golf Club's 23rd Anniversary Golf Derby.

Around 108 participants tee-off in the Monday's opening round.

Today's participants will receive brand new clubs in the upliftment from the PGE management. The finals are set Friday.

More than P2 million in guaranteed prizes will be given to the winners, with all managers Circulo Rosa contributing them.

Big field seen in LPC stagfest

THE 10TH ANNUAL LAUPPAET STAG Derby on Aug. 21 and 23 at Las Piñas Country is expected to post a record number of entries this year based on the number of reservations received by the organizers.

"Nine committee members from as far as Pangasinan, Cebu, Bataan, Davao, Baguio and Zambales have signed up and eager to test their nine hole mettle," said assistant manager Ace Tolosa.

The slugfest will raise funds for Bayanihan of Mayor Nene Aguilar.

Bonus Mini Rambolan prizes

MAE ESPARTERO'S 94 LEGENDS "2008 Rambolan Part II" 5-rock derby at the San Juan Country on July 21, 22, 28, 29 and Aug. 2 will receive bonus prizes.

PR managers Ronald Silva and Butchie Chavez said the handsome gifts from hotel Quezon Friends is SLEX's token of appreciation for the 207 participants who joined the first "Mini Rambolan" last month.

The SLEC management also lowered the entry fee to P5,500 to accommodate small-time rockers.

ONYOK Velasco (above) says Tañamor prepared well.

Onyok: Tañamor may crash medal round

By Dennis U. Rosa, Inquirer Cebu

MANILEÑO "ONYOK" HILARIO WHOSE short stint at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics delighted the country no end, believes that light flyweight boxer Harry Tañamor has a great chance of crashing the medal round in the Bei Games.

"Harry's confident is excellent," said Velasco, now 34, in an interview Sunday. "I feel that he will not go home empty-handed."

Tañamor, an Army sergeant who also competed in the 2004 Athens Olympics, is the country's best bet in the boxing event.

After winning the gold in the inaugural AIBA President's Cup in Taipei, he trained at the ALA Gym in Cebu City under Cuban coach Enrique Iroymes Duani. He resumed training with the visiting African boxers yesterday at the national training camp in Baguio City.

Now a part-time TV and movie actor, Velasco is also a member of the Philippine Sports Commission's monitoring group for national sports associations.

Velasco said he talked with Tañamor before the latter left for Cebu.

"Judging from his answers, Harry's in excellent physical, he is confident of his chances," said Velasco, who lost to Bulgarian Daniel Petrov Bojilov in the light flyweight finals in 1996. "The stage has prepared him very well."

Velasco's silver was the second for the country at the Olympics, after the one won by featherweight pug Anthony Villanueva in the 1964 Tokyo Games, and in last medal following abstract campaigns in 2000 and 2004.

"I have known that he must give his best in every fight and he must box as if his life depends on it," Velasco said. "Of course, he must discipline the lack of the shots on his side."

Hometown bet and World Championship gold medalist Zhou Zhiming is tagged as favorite to win the gold. Other favorites are Yampier Hernandez (Ecuador of Cuba, Shemali Dorjee, Sridhi Ali, Luis Yanez and Stefano Zazzaretta.

Alloy president Manny T. Lopez declined to predict the outcome of Tañamor's campaign.

Nadal: Spain's new golden boy

CLEAN LIVING

Manuelo R. Diego

SNATCHING VICTORY FROM THE jaws of defeat, No. 2 seed Rafael Nadal won his first Wimbledon title, outlasting top-ranked Roger Federer last Sunday (Monday in Manila), 6-4, 6-4, 6-7 (5), 6-7 (8), 9-7, in a grueling 4-hour, 48-minute match. He became the first Spaniard to win the event since 1966, when Manolo Santana pulled off the feat.

The Swiss Federer showdowns will go into the record books as the longest and one of the greatest battles in a men's singles final in Wimbledon history.

Two points away from victory at 5-4 in the fifth set, Federer was standing for a record sixth straight championship at the All England Club since 1977. But the gritty Spaniard, playing in his third finals at Wimbledon, denied the Swiss sensation his chance at glory. Federer had won at the All England Club since 2003.

Speaking in broken English, Nadal said, "It's impossible to explain what I felt in that moment" after accepting the golden trophy.

The 22-year-old Nadal also made history by emerging as the first man since Bjorn Borg in 1980 to win both the Wimbledon and French Open titles in the same year.

Nadal is still young and he's pleasant to watch. With his never-say-die attitude, you always know you are going to get total commitment from him when he plays.

"My hardest loss by far," said Nadal, 26, of his defeat. He will, however, remain on top of the men's world tennis rankings with 6,900 points to Nadal's 5,755. They are expected to meet again in another Grand Slam tournament, the US Open, at Flushing Meadows which begins on Sept. 7.

****

Spain celebrated not just an individual triumph.

The Spanish football team earlier won the 2008 Euro Cup, defeating highly favored Germany, 3-2, to a classic encounter in Moscow. It was the first ever European soccer title for the Spaniards in 44 years.

The victory recalled a similar achievement in 2006 by the highly regarded Spanish basketball team that snatched the World Basketball Championship in Sapporo, Japan, by upsetting 2004 Athens Olympic champion Argentina.

Spain had only one National Basketball Association star in its lineup then, Pau Gasol, who did not even get the chance to play during the championship game due to an injury.

On the other hand, the United States team, which was handing heavily on its NBA superstars, was a big letdown in that tournament and settled for the bronze medal.

****

Residents of my hometown in Mati, Davao, are eagerly awaiting the staging of the third leg of the Viber Cup on July 25 to 27 under the auspices of the Filipino Managers and Players Association of the Philippines.

Supported by Pryce Sports, Bigaj Promotions and Negros Billiards Stable, the event offers a P1 million cash prize.

The widely followed tour will feature the country's crème of the crop headed by Hall of Famer Efren "Bata" Reyes, the 1999 World Pool Championship winner; and Bustan Alonto and Alex Pagulayan, who are also former World Pool Champions.

But all eyes will be on Marlon Lucal Jaco Egay Gonzales, who shocked the billiards scene by sweeping an upset victory over Reyes during the Cebu leg last month.

"It's a great honor to defeat Efren Reyes, the greatest billiards player in the world," said Gonzales.

However, Gonzales did not fare well in the Cebu tournament which was won by Isidro (retired campaigner Cenido Avila, who is a former Asian Games pool medal winner.

Meanwhile, pool lovers are salivating. Will the other billiards group, the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines, follow suit? Pool fans are begging for an answer.

OLYMPICS

Ramirez likes gold chances of Rivero, Go

By Jane Hanarra

AS FAR AS THE HEAD OF THE Philippine Sports Commission is concerned, taekwondo jins Mark Anthony Rivero and Alexander Go sure have got traits to compete for the gold in the coming 2008 Beijing Olympics.

A ranking official of the Philippine Olympic Committee echoed the sentiment, although he didn't exactly say gold.

PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez gave the armchair analysis of the two athletes' chances in taekwondo after a week-long visit in Seoul, South Korea, where Rivero and Go are training under top Korean coaches.

"They've been here training with the best masters in the sport," said Ramirez. "Both (Go and Rivero) have improved a lot. With what I saw, I honestly feel we will have a good shot at the gold."

POC chair Robert Aventajado is also optimistic on the chances of Go and Rivero and of four boxing qualifier Harry Tañamor.

"After seeing these taekwondo jins train in Korea, I believe we have a good chance (on winning a medal)," said Aventajado. "But I don't know the odds."

According to Ramirez, Rivero has been sparring with male jins as part of her daily training regimen while Go has been adding it up with professional fighters in the taekwondo capital.

Ramirez added that four Korean coaches with different lines of expertise are taking care of Olympic contenders Go and Rivero as far as speed, skill and mind-set are concerned.

The 27-year-old Go, who will compete in the men's 58-kilogram class, not the Olympic qualifying grade after landing a silver in the world championships last year in Manchester, England.

Rivero, 26, made the Olympic mark in an Asian qualifying in Vietnam last year. Rivero's main rival in the women's 67-kilogram category is a Korean.

GO Going up against pros

Black-and-blue Evans puts on yellow jersey

AFTER a punishing climb, Cadel Evans finds himself in the lead. The Australian rider becomes emotional during the awarding ritual. (inset) AP

LAST MAN STANDING

Pasargad wrests Puma-UFL title

By Cedell P. Tupas

MEMBERS of the Pasargad Football Club celebrate their victory in the three-month-long tournament with NCRFA president Pete Bannerman (third row, third from left) and Puma head of marketing Ps. Liwanag (second from right).

COMMENTARY

Dara's drama; Recah's return

By Percy D. Dela

RP pool stars try to end pool drought

Nietes wants 'Filipino Assassin' Ulises Solis

By Salvet L. Legumbay

KELLOGG'S CUP

Manchester Area British School Manila alumni show their trophy and honors of Kellogg's breakfast cereals after topping the recent Kellogg's Cup Football Tournament at the Nomads Sports Club in Punatayan City. With them are (from left, back row) Jaime PC communications officer Ludin Bocobo, Kellogg's cluster market manager Teddy Villaflor and Nomads youth football director Tom Whitwell. The tournament, also sponsored by Alaska Fresh and Alaska Yan, drew 473 players from 14 schools in Metro Manila.

SPORTS

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE: Angelo Que writes from Royal Birkdale

Settling into the Open mind-set

ANGELO Que at the Callaway event. At left is top Brit Michael Campbell.

(Reigning Philippine Open champion Angelo Que is the first Filipino to play in the British Open championship in 10 years. This is his diary from Royal Birkdale. The Open starts Thursday.—Ed)

By Angelo Que...as told to Patrick Pascual Joyce

TUESDAY WAS TOTALLY DIFFERENT from yesterday. We went out for a practice round early this morning and the weather was a whole new ball game—overcast, cold and really windy! It really made me realize how different the conditions can be when you play links golf.

The good thing was that it allowed me to practice more the shots I need to play in this sort of weather. Literally, I am getting comfortable with all the variations. I am settling into a mindset in which I know what I will need to do here depending on the conditions.

Required ball flight

After the round, I hit the driving range to keep working on my game, particularly the ball flight required while hitting to, to the wind and crosswinds. It is great here on the range because you actually get to see the balls that you normally can't see, not just regular range balls. It is quite a luxury.

I also picked up some new equipment from my sponsor Callaway, as well as my new limited-edition Open Champion staff bag. That is something really special.

The evening was great too. I was part of the "Best of the World" team vs a Callaway Spider Cup-style event versus Europe. We did a series of skills challenges head to head, and we won! Used Craig Parry, Peraud Mardsenraj and Danny Chia on my team and we beat a team that included Michael Campbell, Mick Dougherty and Graeme McDowell. It was a blast and a great experience to have a friendly competition like that during the week.

The prize was there to have and the whole atmosphere was really enjoyable.

I will take the morning off to conserve energy and then play in the afternoon to familiarize myself with the conditions later in the day. I imagine it will be different again.

At least I have enough warm clothing.

Dottie out to win 3rd crown

By Jong Arzaga

ARZAGA Hot pick

SAN DIEGO—SEE newbie rainers Jessica Ard when Dottie Ardina boards the plane back to Manila next month after completing her season on the Callaway Junior World Championships in one golf course around this coastal southern California city.

There are 12 age group titles to be disputed over the next four days by a select Jaclers cast in what really is one of the world's biggest tournaments with 1,000-plus juniors.

If there are few superstars in the field, Ardina—a two-time winner and twice second-placer here...is no doubt one of them.

"I can't wait to go home and see my dad again," Ardina, one of the four ICTSI scholars at the David Leadbetter Golf Academy, told the Inquirer in Filipino. "I just want to have something, maybe a Jordan Wada is ready to draw [with whom I play] next."

Ardina slipped the official practice round on Monday and opted for a light workout at the range instead. All her five practice rounds in the Oak Glen course were under par.

"Me, with them the best," Jaegolf chair Amalia Monteville said in a message to the players from Manila.

Monteville's squad has already produced 10 Filipino Junior World champions since 1975.

The Philippine delegation is supported by Philippine Airlines, Samsung, Starwood Motors, Condlink and ICTSI.

Gerry Ansolog, the international affairs chair of Jaegolf, expects several Jaclers' debuts here to contend for the crowns.

Those include Miguel Tabuena, who is a late addition to the team, Iocane girls T-9 winner Mia Legaspi, boatbrowsh standout Miggy Yeo, Jhayne Zaragosa and Bernice Ghiwarn Jim.

Ansolog also hopes the teenage events they played the past weeks would translate into good results for Philippine Ladies Open titlist Chihiro Ikeda, 40by Arevalo, Marcel Pepe and even Chloe Reyes.

Cyna shoots 74, gains match play

CYNA PEDRAJLE PLAYED JUST GOOD enough to land a last-spot par 71 at the Knollwood Country Club course and finish joint third in the 15-hole stroke qualifier of the RWAW Women's Masters Golf Association 42nd National Junior Championship in Granger, Indiana, on Monday.

Rodriguez, coming off yards war ICTSI teammate Anna Tampinco in the final wire match play event in last week's PBA Women's division Championship, struggled to a 38 going out but shrugged home with a 36.

She finished one shot behind Natalie Gulbis of Canada and Cameron Stimpel of Florida, who both had 73s in the junior tournament now last year by Britta Arthur.

Rodriguez gained as the drawn to go for a second Junior World title in San Diego.

Excellence in Connection
Enjoy the Best First Class Service in the World

BUSINESS

Editor Raul O. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Carrie S. Martinez

Hairloss Stops At Svenson
Call 892-HAIR (4247)

OFW remittances surged 15.6% in May

IN THIS ISSUE

Shell unit to drill in offshore Palawan /B2
Gov't raised P42.9B more from VAT /B5

533,945 Filipinos found jobs abroad in first 5 months

By Michelle V. Rosca

REMITTANCES SENT BY Filipinos abroad remains a major source of dollars for the country as inflows in May surged 15.6 percent to $1.4 billion from a year ago, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

The latest figure brought the total remittances to $6.8 billion in the first five months of the year, up 14.7 percent from the same period last year.

The data provided by the BSP included only remittances sent through banks and did not take into account those sent through informal channels.

"Double-digit growth in remittances reflected the climate preference for the skills, quality and competence of Filipino workers," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

The growth in remittances was credited partly to the increase in Filipinos deployed to work abroad.

Quoting data from the Philippine

CONTINUED ON B2

ERC releases draft rules on prepaid metering

By Abigail L. Ho

THE ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION has released draft rules on the implementation of prepaid metering, which will mark the power sector's entry into "illegal" or "unfair" marketing.

According to the nine-page draft rules, a distribution utility wanting to go into prepaid retail electric service (PRES) should apply for the ERC's approval, showing that it would be able to provide the service without undermining consumer rights.

Before a power distributor can offer PRES to its residential clients, it must first show the ERC that the prepaid system that it will use are compliant with the standards set by either the International Electrotechnical Commission or the American National Standards Institute.

The meters to be used should also be able to closely inform consumers of their current balance, time and date and a warning that their prepaid credits are about to be exhausted. These should also be able to store at least 10 days of the user's electric consumption.

In forging a contract for the service with consumers, distribution utilities should clearly inform their consumers that electric service would be interrupted if they fail to

INCREASES /B1

Stocks close 1.79% lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.79 PERCENT lower yesterday as other Asian markets fell too amid concerns over the global economy, dealers said.

The composite index fell 44.81 points to 2,410.39 points. The all-share index lost 1.30 percent to 1,507.33 points.

There were only 11 advancers compared to 83 decliners and 43 that remained unchanged.

Turnover amounted to P2.33 billion compared to P1.7 billion on Monday.

"The market is down in line with all the other markets in Asia," said George Ong of Ebrokerhouse. "Oil, inflation, the US economy — these are the concerns we share with all the markets in the region."

"It's not country specific. It's more of what is happening globally. Unless you see a significant development for the rest of the world, I think this will be the trend for the short term," he added.

A sharp drop in the global price of oil would offer the best chance for easing global markets, Ong said.

Index heavyweight PLDT fell 2.02 percent to P2,405. Banco de Oro declined fell 1.25 percent to P36.

San Miguel Corp. saw its "A" shares fall 1.23 percent to P80 while its "B" shares were unchanged at P81.50. AFP

With oil prices sky-rocketing, car companies worldwide are exploring new and better ways to milk the most out of every drop of fuel. A technological trend is fast emerging, as many begin to see the fuel saving potential of tweaking not engines, but transmissions.

Many industry giants say that they will begin to shift to more fuel efficient six speed gearboxes within the next two years.

Locally however, one vehicle is already far ahead of the curve.

Six-speed savior

With rising fuel costs, one answer to better mileage is more gears.

ANOTHER FRONTIER FIRST

The Nissan Frontier Navara is the first and only pickup in the country equipped with a six gear manual transmission. One would expect no less from a pickup bearing a brand name synonymous with innovation. Not only is the Navara spearheading the shift to six, it is also leading the pack in terms of power and torque output. It is the only one with an 8-crossmember chassis. It also has the longest wheelbase, the largest fuel tank, as well as the highest ground clearance.

SIX IS THE NEW FIVE

In the Navara's new advanced drivemain design, five close-ratio lower gears are topped by an overdrive gear for optimum motorway cruising.

In this higher gear, the transmission puts the engine rpm at a comfortable and more fuel efficient level, even at swifter road speeds. The resulting low engine revs mean better economy and less noise.

BIGGER GEARS, MORE STRENGTH

Mechanics will tell you that, as a general rule, having more gears lessens fuel consumption.

A wider gear span allows you to optimize the engine output to better match your vehicle's operational demands.

While power in the low gears is what gives a pickup its towing and hauling capability, travelling speedily in those low gears can consume more fuel than is necessary.

On the other hand, running on higher gears puts less stress on the engine. Punching into a high gear increases fuel economy and, by reducing your revs, may also help cut engine emissions.

Because the Navara's six gear MT is mated to a 2nd Generation Common Rail Turbo Intercooler diesel engine, the result is class-leading fat muscle (174 Horsepower) and the most amount of torque(403 Nm), yet with minimal emissions and surprising mileage.

THE NUMBERS PROVE IT

In media test drives conducted from Makati to Baler, the Navara raked a high 18.6 kms/liter in one remarkable run.

6-speed Fuel Challenge

Gears used to drive the most number of kms on 10Liters	Nissan A	Nissan B	Nissan C
Liters replaced	11.19	11.68	10.14
Odometer reading	167.9	167.8	166.7
Kilometers per liter	13	14.31	16.43

In a fuel hike weary world, that alone is great reason to SHIFT TO SIX.

SportUtility Truck
Navara

Test drive a Navara SUT. The first and only six-speed pickup. Text 0919-8NISSAN

CUSTOM MADE RACKS, QUALITY YOU CAN TRUST!

JUSTIC CORPORATION
No. 30 Dasmariñas St. Binondo Manila Philippines
Tel. Nos.: 242-2948-49 • 241-5237

It's a Three Peat for BPI

For the third consecutive year, the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) was named Number One Bank for OFW Remittance by Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

BPI received the BSP Top Commercial Bank for Overseas Filipino Remittance Award in the years 2006, 2006, and 2007 for having the highest volume of Overseas Filipino remittances. This latest award elevated BPI to the Hall of Fame, the first bank to do so in this category. Awarding ceremonies were held on July 11, 2008, at the SMX Compound.

BPI Remittance is fast, safe, and reliable. Innovations are continuously made to better serve OFWs. Recently, its network was expanded to almost throughout Asia with its new partners worldwide, and now has opened overseas offices in Italy, the UK, and the US. There are also on site services like Pick-up Anywhere that are available in BPI branches.

Aside from just serving remittances, BPI is offering full banking products that will enable the OFWs to save and achieve their dreams. The Global has the new Go Direct Save-to and BPI my Save and Protect, a retirement endowment plan, and BPI my Save and Study, an educational endowment plan.

Conscious of its role in the community, the Bank of the Philippine Islands gives back to clients through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities like the financial education programs in its BPI my Life Series.

Shell unit to drill in offshore Palawan

By Abigail L. Ho

SHELL PHILIPPINES EXPLORATION BV (Spex), operator of Service Contract 60 in Northeast Palawan, has decided to take its exploration resource to the next level by contracting to drill at least one well in the concession area within two years.

It is disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc. (the) Securities Inc., which holds a 19 percent interest in SC 60, said the service contract consortium decided to go into sub-phase 2 of development in the area, which entailed further exploration and the drilling of one well before Dec. 10, 2010.

The SC 60 consortium completed its August last year its first 3D seismic survey of the area, paving the way for more concrete exploration and drilling plans.

Spex earlier said the 3D data gathering off the deep waters of Northeast Palawan, which was completed on Aug. 12, 2007, formed part of its work commitment under SC 60 to explore for oil and gas in the contract area.

"The survey enhances understanding of the prospectivity of the license area and will determine the need to further explore in the block," Spex had said.

The SC 60 consortium members—which include Spex, Forum Oilmax Resources and Everest Foreign Petroleum Co.—have committed to invest at least $24 million over seven years in the area.

SC 60, which covers a relatively unexplored area spanning 1.06 million hectares, was formerly Geographical Survey and Exploration Contract 39 or GSEC-39.

According to the Department of Energy, SC 60 is one of the promising sites for petroleum exploration as identified by the Philippine Petroleum Resources Assessment Project Study jointly conducted by the DOE and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.

Challenge | Response | Impact

League of Corporate Foundations

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CONFERENCE 2008:

CSR is Everyone's Business

July 16 to 18, 2008 • Makati Shangri-La Hotel, Makati City

The League of Corporate Foundations (LCF), an association of 79 operating and grant making corporate foundations and corporations, is putting member organizations in effectively respond to current social and environmental issues through the promotion of inclusive Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. Through LCF's efforts, companies are now integrating CSR into their core operations, equating business competitiveness with social action.

In line with this, LCF is presenting CSR Conference 2008, featuring high-caliber resource speakers who will present global and regional CSR trends and strategies. The conference also gathers visionary CEOs and top officials from multinational companies, local firms, and SMEs, who will converge in a dialogue on crafting effective and responsive CSR programs.

Designed for CEOs, middle managers, and practitioners, CSR Conference 2008 makes corporate social responsibility work for you.

Conference Program

July 16, 2008 | Day One: Defining your CSR issue and crafting a vision

Opening Plenary

The CSR Context
Speaker: Mr. Augusto M. Carpio-R, Vice President for Resource Mobilization, LCF

Global Trends in CSR
Speaker: Dr. Bradley K. Googins, Executive Director, Boston College for Corporate Citizenship

CSR in the Region
Speaker: Dr. Tilleman R. Ursua, Jr., Executive Director, ADB/AVI Foundation

Social Investment
Speaker: Ms. Paola "Chit" U. Juan, President, LCF

National Blueprints
Speaker: Mrs. Edita "Tingi" C. Monsod, Professor, UP School of Economics

Luncheon Plenary

The Business Case for CSR: A Dialogue with Business Leaders
Luncheon dialogue with CEOS and representatives from key business/ professional organizations and LCF Chair Mr. Jon Ongsiako and SGVFP

Introduction: Prof. Felipe B. Alfonso, Asian Institute of Management

Moderator: Ms. Cecilia "Che Che" L. Lazaro, President, Probe Productions, Inc.

Panelists: Mr. Paolo Benigno "Bam" A. Aquino IV, President, Philcontinuums, Inc.

Mr. Jaime "Jimmy" I. Ayala, President, Ayala Land, Inc.

Ms. David J. Perry, President & Managing Director, Goodyear Philippines

Ms. Charo Santos-Concio, President, ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.

Mr. Jose Ernesto C. Villatoro, COO & Executive Vice President, Petron Mktg.

Mr. Bert Hofman, Country Director, World Bank

Afternoon Plenary

Indicators of a Winning Strategy
Speaker: Dr. Bradley K. Googins, Executive Director, Boston College for Corporate Citizenship

Samples and Case Studies in the Philippines

July 17, 2008 | Day Two: Developing and implementing winning CSR strategies

CSR: Business Value: How do you operationalize winning CSR strategies?

Breakout Sessions

CSR and Supply Chain Management: Boosting Efficiency and Sustainability
Facilitator:
Prof. Vivian N. Hacquebjan, Professor, De La Salle Professional Schools
Cases:
Mr. Arthur D. Lim, President and Dexter Head Agro Industrial Group, San Miguel Foods, Inc.
Mr. Ronald O. Mapua, Education Sector Head, Nutrea Mission Pte

Mr. Raymond T. Lim,
President, Double Phoenix Foods, Inc.

Employee Engagement: Investing in People
Facilitator:
Mr. Jose V. A. Pena, Executive Director, Personnel Management Association of the Philippines

Cases:
Mr. Thomas S. Aubin, CSR Manager, Shell
Mr. Hamilton "Hamy" A. Cardel, EVP/General Manager, First Electric Dynamics Corporation

July 17, 2008 | Day Two: Developing and implementing winning CSR strategies

NPOs and CSR: Addressing the industry's unique needs through CSR
Facilitator:
Mr. Guillermo "Gary" S. Iñigo, Executive Director, External Relations Executives Professionals Association

Cases:
Mr. Ruth G. Lu, Country Managing Director
Action Against Hunger, Philippines, Mali
Ms. Jane B. Gonzalez, Executive Director, SPI

Cause-related Marketing: Creating Brand Loyalty
Facilitator:
Ms. Rachel J. Tinsay, Managing Director & Head of Creative, Campaigns and Ads

Cases:
Ms. Ma. Lourdes Clemente, SPI Head
Philippine Commercial Corporation

Crisis and Issues Management: Gaining strength amidst crisis with CSR
Facilitator:
Mr. Jesse T. Campos, President, Public Relations Society of the Philippines

Cases:
Mr. [illegible], Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company
Dr. Mary Racelis, Senior Director for International Programs, Tufts University
Ms. Maria C. Nieves, Sustainability Reporting & Stakeholder Engagement, PLDT
Mr. Robert Cunningham, Senior Executive Director, Petron Foundation, Inc.

Lunch Plenary: CSR and Brand Value
Introduction: Mr. Jose T. Sio Piaco, Managing Director, ENN Investment Services Inc.
Moderator: Ms. Karen Davila, Broadcast Journalist, ABS-CBN Broadcasting Network

Panelists: Ms. Nanda Viloa, Managing Director, McCann Erickson

Ms. Margie Nunez, VP of Marketing, McDonald's Philippines

Mr. Dinadodo "Ding" Salvador, Jr., Marketing Consultant, Lamoiyan Corporation

Ms. Clarissa V. Carillo, Advertising & Promotions Director, Petron Corporation

The Social and Environmental Agenda: Identifying gaps and priorities in education, impact of social responsibility, business opportunities
Moderator: Ms. Rose "Bebot" Gotuaco, Project Director of City Development Strategies League of Cities

Panelists: Sec. Esperanza Cabral, Secretary, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)

Gov. Grace Padaca, Governor, Isabela Province

Dr. Maria Lim Ayuyao, President, Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWWPP)

Dr. Angelina P. Galang, Former Executive Director, Environmental Science Institute, Miriam College

Countdown to Partnership
Message: Sec. Angelo Reyes, Secretary, Department of Energy (DOE)

Integration and Closing Program

July 18, 2008 | Day Three: Assessment workshop

Organized by the LCF's Corporate Social Responsibility Institute, learn from CSR practitioners on how to assess your company's CSR programs. This one-day workshop is designed to guide CSR officers and implementers on how to strategically position their CSR programs by mapping stakeholders, analyzing relevant issues, gaps and priorities, assessing how the company is addressing stakeholder expectations, and revisiting the company's social vision.

Attendance at sessions are FREE for CEOs, Senior Managers, CSR Practioners and CSR Academicians **except for:** **Day 1** - Luncheon Plenary - Php 1,500 **Day 2** - Luncheon Plenary - Php 1,500 **Day 3** - Workshop - Php 3,500

Strength Partner: Team Energy | Institutional Partner | Major Sponsors | Apolo Social Initiatives | PNOC EDC | Platinum | Gold | Silver | Media Partners | Official Radio Partners

For updates on the conference, please log on to **www.lcf.org.ph**. To register online, visit **http://www.teamasia.com/events/lcf_2008**. Contact Ira Evangelista at 7573500 local 332 or email her at kaevangelista@teamasia.com

Bank examiner pulls a fast one

THERE CAN'T BE A BANK EXAMINER MORE concerning than this one.

A Bangko Sentral examiner found it incredible to own a rural bank while being a bank regulator himself. The only did he take over a rural bank located in a far-flung province, he also borrowed P800,000 from the BSP's provident fund to purchase a building, which thus leased office space to this rural bank.

That bank examiner has been suspended and is now facing charges in court filed by the BSP. And his rural bank had been shut down by the central bank.

The funny thing was, at the time the Bangko Sentral was building up the case against this conflicted bank examiner, he was still reporting to the office every day.

BSP officials lamented that he couldn't be easily sacked because of competition under the civil service law. *Dave L. Dumlao*

Tony Boy takes a partner

ABC-5 OF Antonio "Tony Boy" Cojuangco will start broadcasting programs produced by its new Malaysian partner Media Prima Berhad on Aug. 1 in a bid to revive the TV station's flagging fortunes.

Banking company officials said Tony Boy's group—which includes former Finance Secretary Jose "Ting" Pardo and Bank of Commerce president Raul de Mesa—initially explored the possibility of bringing to the Malaysian firm, Media Prima Berhad, in some form of equity partner, but were deterred by the constitutional prohibition on foreign ownership of media outlets.

"Instead, we will just co-produce programs and air them on Channel 5," an official said.

Eventually all programs to be aired over ABC-5 will be Media Prima programs, or at least co-produced, leaving the station's news programs as the only ones of purely local content. *Dazelle Lucas*

High and dry

SM INVESTMENT Corp. officials recently showed off its 6,000-hectare Hamilo Coast mixed-use development in Batangas to investment members of the fourth estate—part of the company's drive to further drum up interest in the project.

Ever since Hamilo Coast was unveiled, officials of high-end property developer Landco, which owns the adjacent ultra-rich enclave of Punta Fuego, have quietly free-

BUSINESS BUZZ

By the staff

tail on how the SM mega project will affect their fortunes.

One thing they are counting on to lend the playing field a bit is the shortage of possible stores in the community.

"But ask them, where will they get their wines?" said a cruising Landco official with a chuckle.

As is usually the local water district already has trouble supplying the needs of the local community and Punta Fuego, which is occupied largely during weekends only.

The likely answer for SM's Hamilo Coast is an expensive "reverse osmosis" water treatment facility that will supply the water requirements of the huge community.

High-flying SMIC will have to draw on its well of experience if it hopes to bring down the cost of water in the area—either through economies of scale or direct subsidies. *Dazelle Lucas*

GSIS springs a trap

THE LOPEZ family seems to have won the initial round of the battle for libraries and things are beginning to quiet down.

But pro-Eliseo Gercia insiders say the fight is far from over.

Pushing on a brave face after their recent setback, one official who moves in the inner circle of the Arroyo administration said the legal battle would turn like a yo-yo all the way to the Supreme Court.

"That's what Winston wanted all along," he said, quite confidently. "The Lopezes made a mistake by falling into the trap."

A version unclear how this "trap" is supposed to work. But the loan around town that has been gathering intensity in recent weeks is that the GSIS intends on the Lopez's return journal is meant to soften it up for an eventual buy-in by a prominent businessman who is looking for new investments. Why is he? Clue No. 1: He is NOT a subject. Clue No. 2: He is rich-rich. *Dazelle Lucas*

Two for the road

Please welcome the newest addition to the Herald Suites service: Herald Suites Solana.

(Now, no word here to turn away guests who need our warm, attentive service.)

Herald Suites is the Central Business District and Herald Suites Solana.

The first is the middle of it all. The second, quieter and off the beaten track.

Take your pick.

HERALD SUITES

HERALD SUITES Solana

Herald Suites - The comforts of Home

P2B in property projects to rise in Camp John Hay

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

NEW PROPERTY PROJECTS worth over P2 billion will soon rise within the Camp John Hay leisure complex in Baguio City.

Listed property developer Fil-Estate Land Inc. said Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJH DevCo), where the Fil-Estate Group has a 30-percent stake, plans to start construction of condominium hotels and duplex town house units within the complex by the end of the year.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, Fil-Estate Land said it had signed a memorandum of agreement with CJH DevCo and Fil-Estate Land subsidiary Fil-Estate Urban Development Corp. (FUDC) for the redevelopment of the Camp John Hay Suites and Forest Cabins. The development cost is expected to reach P330 million.

In consideration for extending its guarantee, Fil-Estate Land will also acquire five lots in Vireland Hill within Camp John Hay, which can be sold outright or developed into mid-rise leisure condos.

Fil-Estate Land will also acquire development rights over one lot with an area of 12,554 square meters in South Drive, just outside Camp John Hay.

Fil-Estate Land expects to realize up to P795 million in income from these projects. The estimated development cost for both projects is P1.9 billion.

Fil-Estate unit to start work by end of 2008

San Development Corp. (FEUDC) for the completion of the Camp John Hay Suites and Forest Cabins. Under the agreement, CJH DevCo will contribute the leasehold rights in Camp John Hay. It is also the developer of the project. FEUDC, meanwhile, will finance the completion of the project while Fil-Estate Land will guarantee the $25-million loan of FEUDC from Land Asia Holdings Fund.

FEUDC is expected to earn a net income of P98 million from the development of the Camp John Hay Suites and Forest Cabins. The development cost is expected to reach P330 million.

In consideration for extending its guarantee, Fil-Estate Land will also acquire five lots in Vireland Hill within Camp John Hay, which can be sold outright or developed into mid-rise leisure condos.

Fil-Estate Land will also acquire development rights over one lot with an area of 12,554 square meters in South Drive, just outside Camp John Hay.

Fil-Estate Land expects to realize up to P795 million in income from these projects. The estimated development cost for both projects is P1.9 billion.

ALI bond gets high marks

RESEARCH FIRM PHILIPPINE RATING Services Corp. has given its highest rating to the P4-billion bond of real estate giant Ayala Land Inc.

The bond was rated PRS Aaa, which means that the bonds that ALI's carry the "smallest degree of investment risk."

PhilRatings cited the company's "strong sales" which substantially all projects expecting high take-up rates."

ALI's gross revenues in the first quarter of the year registered at P9.23 billion or 20 percent more than in the same period last year.

The company's main business from reported robust sales with residential units accounting for P5.3 billion.

Gross revenues came from bookings of 3,000 units from 30 projects in the first quarter of 2008 or 17 percent higher than the same period last year.

Strong earnings were also attributed to rental rate increases in its leasing businesses, such as office space and shopping centers, and additional gross leasable area from shopping centers contributed by a new expansion building at Ayala Center Cebu, Greenbelt 5 and Terraces in Quezon City.

Despite "prevailing issues and looming uncertainties," PhilRatings affirmed the company's plans for sustained growth through its residential development, shopping centers and corporate business line. Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PSALM starts auction of Panay, Bohol units

By Abigail L. Ho

POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND Liabilities Management Corp. has started the bidding process for the 146.5-megawatt (MW) Panay and 22-MW Bohol diesel-fired power plant package.

In an invitation to bid published yesterday, PSALM said investors interested in bidding for the plants had until July 30 to submit their letters of intent.

Interested bidders would then have to pay a nonrefundable fee of $2,000 and execute a confidentiality agreement and an undertaking with PSALM by Aug. 1.

Those qualified to go further into the bidding process could conduct due diligence on the plants from July 17 to Oct. 17.

The Panay facility consists of the 36.5-MW Panay 1 and the 110-MW Panay 3 diesel plants.

Panay 1 was commissioned in 1979, while Panay 3, also known as the Dingininan diesel power plant, was relocated in 2003 from its original location in Barangay.

The Bohol plant, on the other hand, consists of four 5.5-MW generating units.

The facility operates as a peaking and voltage-regulating plant.

To clarify any bidding issues and plant-related concerns, a pre-bid conference has been scheduled for Aug. 6.

The deadline for the submission of final bids for the plant package was set for Oct. 29.

The Panay plant was originally bundled with the 192.5-MW Palinpinon geothermal power facility and was first placed on the auction block late last year.

Issues surrounding the geothermal resources sales contract (SRSC) to be attached to the Palinpinon plant, however, prompted PSALM to shelve the bidding for the plant's package.

PSALM then decided to sell Palinpinon separately and bundle the Panay facility with the Bohol generation asset.

The Palinpinon plant, instead of being sold last month, would be bid out next year.

This is to give the Joint Congressional Power Commission and steam supplier Energy Development Corp. enough time to iron out issues regarding the SRSC.

Gov't raised ₱42.9B more from VAT

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE GOVERNMENT GENERATED P42.9 billion in additional revenue from the imposition of the 12-percent universal value-added tax in the first five months of the year, the Department of Finance said in a presentation the other day to members of the House oversight committee.

Of the five-month additional VAT collection, the DOF said P19.405-billion came from the Bureau of Internal Revenue while P23.489-billion came from the Bureau of Customs.

The BIR slaps VAT on domestically produced goods and rendered services, while the BOC charges VAT on imported goods.

The DOF said the combined imposition of VAT would generate for the government P1.91.2 billion for the entire year.

In the same committee hearing, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said that of the projected full-year VAT collections, the VAT on oil accounted for the biggest chunk of P74 billion.

The department forecasted firm oil prices to continue registering upwards to hit the $ 12 percent VAT, saying the proceeds from the imposition of the tax were needed to fund more social services projects for the poor. Pro-poor programs, it said, were necessary in the light of the weakened currency in commodity prices.

"DOF studies also show that lifting the VAT will largely benefit the rich because they are the biggest consumers of oil, while most of the products consumed by poor families are already VAT exempt," Teves said in an earlier statement.

The finance chief said agricultural products, which accounts for the bulk of the basket of goods consumed by poor families, were not covered by the 12-percent VAT.

To better help poor families cope with the baseline caused by rising prices, Teves said tax collection should be made more efficient and proceeds from which should be used to fund pro-poor programs.

Calls for the government to remove the VAT, especially on oil, came from certain legislators, economists, and the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines. In explaining its stand, CBCP said poverty was likely to worsen because of the accelerated rise in commodity prices.

Year-on-year inflation for 11.4 percent in June, the highest in 14 years, due to tight supply and growing demand for oil and rice.

Economists assured that rising inflation could push more people to poverty, as prices of basic needs are becoming more and more expensive.

ExcelAsia expands to meet demand

By Kennel W. Domingo

RECRUITMENT AND training services firm ExcelAsia yesterday said it was beefing up its infrastructure and curricula amid a growing number of global clients engaging the firm for their workforce needs.

Annie Trillo, ExcelAsia vice president for training and development, said the Cebu-based firm was pursuing an emerging service provider, Incent Worldwide and Telcobiz had engaged ExcelAsia's services for human resources solutions.

"We are continually enhancing our infrastructure and training program delivery to make sure we deliver our services as committed," Trillo said.

"A good example is the number of computer stations we've added in our training centers to cater to our growing number of customers," she said.

ExcelAsia spends two to three months on those who have passed initial screening by potential employers but still need to develop certain skills to qualify for employment.

The company's trainees are trained for free, which is made possible through the government's Training for Work scholarship program.

Trillo said that upon completion of the training program, trainees were enforced by the company to its clients.

She said that on the average, ExcelAsia was making 100 new hire endorsements monthly to its BPO clients such as Accion Worldwide Philippines Inc. and Incolin Inc.

MYOB
Mind Your Own Business Smarter
With Multi-Warehouse Inventory.
Special Offer
FREE!
MUSTARD Seed

Can SSS members trust Neri?

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Romesto C. General

ROMULO NERI, HOMER WITH A PHD[illegible] appointment, will take over from Corazon dela Paz Bersamin as president and chief executive officer of the Social Security System on Aug. 1.

Judging from his bio-data, Neri is eminently qualified for his new post. Graduate of macho cum laude from UP, he earned a master's degree in Business Administration, majoring in finance, at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA). His educational background is truly impressive.

His work experience though is limited to government finance. But he is a bright boy who can handle the books and keep track of the financial and investment instruments of social security and, if he studies hard enough, he should be able to understand the multi-national and actuarial underpinnings of insurance.

Neri's new posting is a full-time job. But, he will also head a so-called cluster of government corporations that may look unrelated to each other, but are actually entirely different creatures.

In a sense, running the SSS is simple. RA 8282 is rather rigid map that is not too difficult to follow. Even the trouble is that the SSS is now insulated from political pressure, particularly from Malacañang. Although the only government money in the SSS was the P5B[illegible] appropriated as seed money back in 1957, politicians, especially the Presidential and the Malacañang staff, resisted help from try to dip their hands into the SSS' funds.

I seriously doubt Neri can resist the tremendous pressure that will certainly be brought to bear on him by politicians of all colors and stripes. Dela Paz refused to give in to politicians' pressure. Malacañang's failure to resign he being "unresponsive."

The basic pay is P250,000/a month. In the case of Dela Paz, that was members' money well spent. In her seven-year stint, she increased the SSS from the brink of bankruptcy to[illegible] and a half trillion peso.

In the case of Neri, the base pay not to mention all the other perks, is an overpay.

OFW remittances ...

from page B1

Overseas Employment Administration, the BSP said the number of deployed Filipinos totaled 1,013,946 from January to May, higher by 48 percent than the 383,777 recorded in the same period last year.

The source of banks to establish more remittance abroad also allowed them to capture more remittance sent by Filipinos overseas, the BSP said.

Treasury said remittances were expected to remain robust in the months ahead. Oil-related exports of the expansion of oil production capacity in the Middle East to service growing global demand for oil. Treasury said the expansion could result in higher demand for Filipino workers.

The growth figure on remittances for the first five months of the year kept the treasury on track to meet, if not exceed, the BSP's full year projection of a 12-percent rise to $15.7 billion.

Remittances helped ease the depreciation of the peso this year. If not for the strong inflows from Filipinos abroad, analysts said the peso could have weakened even more than its current level.

Although it reached record highs last year, the peso began to depreciate this year because of weakening foreign portfolio investments arising from an unfavorable economic environment. The accelerated rise in inflation has discouraged investors from putting money in the country's financial system.

The peso, which recently breached the 42-to-a-dollar territory, was also being weighed down by the slowdown in exports and rising imports.

Imports grew by only 3.1 percent in the first five months, way below the government's full-year target of 6 percent, because of the weakening demand for electronics, the Philippines' major export product.

On the other hand, latest figures showed that imports already rose 17.7 percent from January to April, much faster than the government-set full-year projection of only 8 percent.

The rise in imports was mainly due to higher prices of oil and rice rather than an increase in the volume of domestic demand for imported goods.

ERC releases draft ...

from page B1

maintain a positive balance—just like with prepaid telecommunication services.

Since PRES is a new service, those wanting to utilize it should inform the ERC of the manner by which they would recover the cost of the new meters, the rates to be applied, the length of the billing cycle, the target implementation date, and the methods to be used in determining the hours that would be attributed to prepaid electricity customers and how much this would contribute to overall system losses.

The distribution utility should also formulate a scheme governing the shift from postpaid to prepaid service, and vice versa, including the refund or payment of customers' bill deposit.

Electric customers wishing to shift to prepaid service would be given a refund of their bill deposit. However, they should stay enrolled in the service for a minimum of six months.

No meter deposit would be charged to prepaid customers. The distribution utility should bear the cost of the new prepaid meters.

Charges resulting in respect to prepaid service, on the other hand, would have to pay the appropriate bill deposit to the distribution utility.

Although prepaid in nature, the PRES rules also require distribution utilities to issue printed receipts to their customers.

The ERC has given interested stakeholders until Aug. 15 to submit their comments on the draft rules. Public consultations will be held in Luzon on Aug. 25 and in Visayas and Mindanao on dates that have yet to be announced.

Brighter N Better offer by BenQ DLP Projectors.
BenQ Mp511+
2100 ANSI LUMENS
SVGA (800x600 pixels)
5.7 lbs./2.6 kgs.
180 W, 2000/3000 hours
Php 29,888.00
FREE Projection Screen
benq

ACDelco

ACDelco, a US brand and global leader in the supply of automotive aftermarket products, is currently looking for:

IMPORTER / DISTRIBUTOR

Our products cater to all-makes, all-models type of vehicle (Japanese, American, European and other Imports) offering high quality standards and competitive pricing. Product Lines include (but not limited to):

- Maintenance Free battery
- Engine Oils and Lubes
- Car care products
- Shocks and Struts
- Spark Plugs
- Wiper Blades
- Oil and Air Filters

Interested parties may send Letter of Intent together with brief company profile to ludi.pastor@gm.com not later than July 31, 2008

For more details, please visit our website at www.acdelcoasean.com or www.acdelco.com

At One Central,
the views from the top are so much sweeter.

One CENTRAL

THE PHILIPPINE GRAND ADDRESS OF SUCCESS

Own a whole new perspective on life—right at the center of the Makati CBD. At One Central, spectacular views reveal a relaxing side to the city, and set the pace of your day to slow. Enjoy a feast for the senses in the luxury home of your choice. Treetop View Residences overlook the crown of tall trees at the Forest Park. Pool View Residences face the pool deck, with three kinds of pools as well as spa and entertainment pavilions. And all the other homes command dramatic views of the Makati skyline. On top of the impressive scenery, even a unique CBD lifestyle perfected down to the last detail. The homes are fully furnished to make everyday living truly indulgent. Lofts in a variety of layouts offer up to 232 square metres of lavish space. And with the widest range of amenities anywhere in the city, the play deck on the seventh level easily transforms into an oasis of health and rejuvenation.

At One Central, everything comes together to showcase your success high above it all.

"Success is a state of mind. You not only have to be in that state. You have to live there."

All residences FULLY FURNISHED.
With the BEST in PLAY AMENITIES.
Own a lifestyle of success
in the most exclusive of locations.

Visit us on July 15 to 19 anytime from 8 AM to 8 PM
at the Tower Club, 32/F Philamlife Tower,
Paseo de Roxas, Makati

For inquiries about our special payment plans, call us now at
856-4220, 856-4221 or Cell# 0915-3137409.

A Premier Residential Development of

MEGAWORLD

MOTORING

E-mail: pi_motoring@inquirer.com.ph

Edie Cesar D. Manganaan

NEW LOOK, PRICING AND SOLID HANDLING

RP compact sedan market's formidable foe

BOLD design and improved driving dynamics highlight the latest Lancer.

SAVE FUEL 10%-15% & MAINTENANCE COST RE-BALANCE & CERAMIC COAT YOUR ENGINE TEL. 3742426-27

By Charles E. Bahar

IF LOOKS ALONE could sell a car, then the 2008 Mitsubishi Lancer EX could be it.

Sporting a design that was first revealed during the 2005 Tokyo Motor Show (Concept-X car), the 9th generation Lancer offers a lot more personality than its predecessor.

Offered in three trim levels, GT-A (5-speed automatic with paddle shifters), GT (5-speed manual), and SE (6-speed automatic with paddle shifters), our test unit belongs to the 2008 Lancer EX: interesting-looking rearview headlights and its wedged front that is described by the company as "shark-nosed" and fighter jet-inspired.

Being introduced at a much later date than the Honda Civic and Toyota Corolla Altis, Mitsubishi Motor Philippines Corp. made sure the 2008 Lancer EX is well-equipped with features that could enable it to upstage and wrestle market share away from its two main rivals.

Upmarket

The 2008 Lancer EX goes upmarket with a selection of standard features once regarded as luxury items (mostly are available in the GTA model): nine-speaker Rockford Fosgate audio system that included a woofer-mounted 10 cm subwoofer), chromed-alloy paddle shifters, rear spoiler, 16-inch 10-spoke silver wheels, seven dual stage airbags (two front

catalytic CONVERTERS CAT.—

Stop your SMOKE BELCHING problem

Save precious $$$!

Your truck doesn't have to get caught smoke belching again.

■ FOR DIESEL 3-way, dual bed converter

■ FOR GASOLINE 2-way, single bed converter

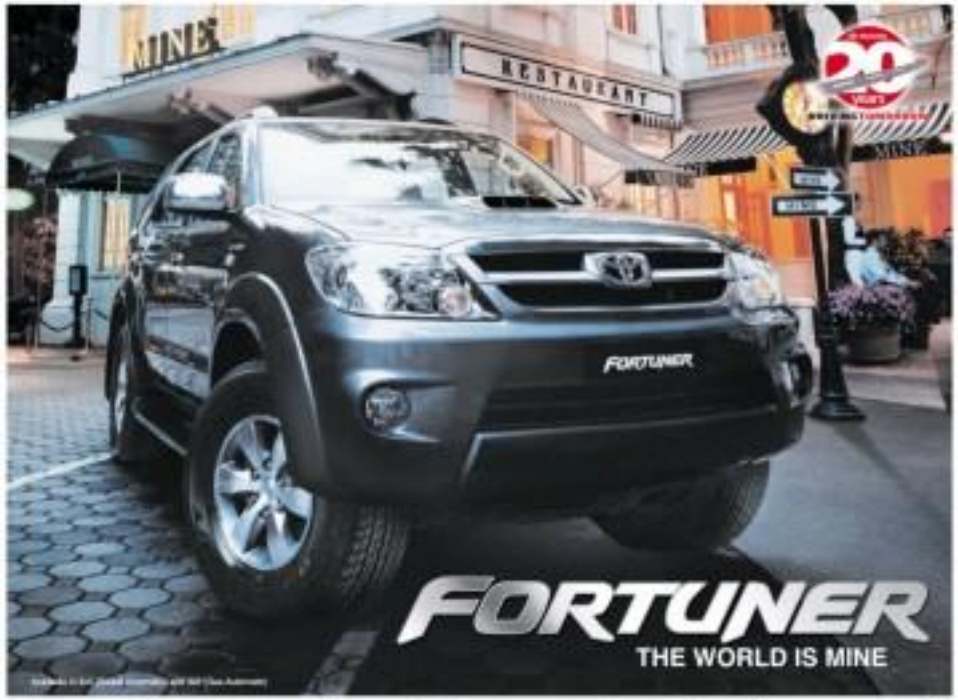
Customer Support Hotline: (02) 418-1197; (02) 729-0784

Give Your Business A LIFT

We offer all types of SERVICE LIFT for various applications

EMCOR INC.

CAGAYAN DE ORO OFFICE:



D-4D WT-i

POWERFUL ENGINE

LUXURIOUS ACCOMMODATION, SUPERIOR COMFORT

ABS

STATE-OF-THE-ART SAFETY FEATURES

These who own the world see it differently. What most consider conventional contradictions, they see as a seamless fusion. Bold yet refined. Rugged yet stylish. Brimming with power, yet safe as home. A symbol of strength, yet a vision of beauty. Teaming with cutting-edge technology, yet interfaces effortlessly with its master. A luxury SUV unlike any other - the Toyota Fortuner.

Own a Fortuner for as low as P13,412 a month!*

*36% downpayment at 12 months on selected variants

TOYOTA moving forward

Mercedes-Benz C-Class worldwide market leader since start of year

STUTTGART—IN THE YEAR since its market launch, the new Mercedes-Benz C-Class is continuing the success story of the predecessor model: more than 800,000 customers have purchased either a sedan or station wagon ordered at the new model since its official introduction on March 31, 2007.

"The sedan got off to an excellent start, and since its premiere at dealerships at the end of last year, the new C-Class station wagon has also been enjoying high popularity," says Dr. Heinz Mistet, executive vice president for Sales and Marketing, Mercedes-Benz Cars.

Posted growth rates

"Both models, in fact, have posted growth rates of 70 percent on the corresponding periods from the prior year since their respective launches. As a result, the new C-Class has been the worldwide leader in its market segment since the beginning of 2008."

German customers also are very enthusiastic about the new C-Class, according to Germany's Federal Motor Transport Authority: the model was once again the top-selling vehicle in the mid-range segment in April.

The most important market for the C-Class is Germany, which accounts for 28 percent of total sales, followed by the United States, United Kingdom, Italy and South Africa. A total of 290,000 C-Class sedans from the 204 Series have been sold worldwide since market launch in the spring of 2007, and 28,000 customers have taken delivery of a new C-Class station wagon since that model variant was introduced in December.

Successful feature

A particularly successful feature of the new C-Class is the broad functional differentiation between the model's three equipment lines. "In the first year of sales, one out of every two C-Class customers in Germany chose the Avantgarde line and in other core markets the share of total sales sometimes is even higher," Mistet says.

"The response of our customers to the sporty design of the C-Class Avantgarde even exceeded our expectations. This new product strategy makes the vehicle very attractive to the most diverse customers within the heterogeneous C-Class customer base, and it also enables us to win over new customers to the Mercedes-Benz brand," he says.

Along with the new model's distinctive design, C-Class customers are also attracted by the vehicle's even more dynamic chassis, which features a selective damping system that also offers great comfort. Other major selling points include a further refined telematics system with Bluetooth, and a new (supervisory) voice command system.

In addition, the station wagon takes the trademark strengths of the sedan—including safety, agility and comfort—and combines them with a significant increase in spaciousness and versatility. With maximum cargo capacity of 1,500 liters, the new station wagon offers more space than any other premium station wagon in its segment.

Given all these attributes, it's not surprising that the C-Class station wagon was also the top-selling model in its segment in Germany last April.

Numerous awards

The new C-Class model series has won numerous German and international awards since its premiere. For example, the C-Class sedan readily beat out its competitors in Germany's largest survey for the most popular automobile in January 2008, winning this year's prestigious Golbe Engel award presented by Germany's Adac automobile association.

In addition, readers of Auto Bild magazine voted the C-Class Germany's most attractive sedan, while the publication motor sport and sport crowned it the most attractive mid-range model. What's more, 350,000 participants in Europe's largest Internet vote chose the C-Class for the 2007 "Carolina Internet Auto Award" as the most popular car in Europe.

Mercedes-Benz offers the four-cylinder and seven six-cylinder engine variants for the C-Class, as well as the C 63 AMG.

Environmental certificate

The new Mercedes-Benz C-Class sedan and station wagon are the first cars in their market segment to come with an environmental certificate. By issuing this certificate, the TÜV Süd Management Service GmbH technical inspectorate compiling has confirmed the environmentally responsible development of the cars.

This boasts further advances across the entire vehicle lifecycle in key areas including fuel consumption, exhaust gas emissions, and the materials used in its manufacture. Mercedes-Benz is the only automaker worldwide to have received this demanding environmental certificate.

The new CLC sport coupe arrived at dealerships in Sweden, Europe last month. Among other things, the model series will offer customers an attractive entry-level variant in the Mercedes-Benz coupé family. The CLC's sporty appearance clearly sets it apart, as the vehicle's lines and trim were completely redesigned in keeping with the silhouettes Mercedes-Benz design ideas.

Meets high standards

The CLC also meets the high standards for safety, comfort, environmental compatibility and functionality that are a hallmark of Mercedes-Benz. The model's technical highlights include an all-new direct steering system for even greater agility when cornering, state-of-the-art infotainment systems with a color display and a more powerful four-cylinder engine that now delivers 135 kW/184 hp for the CLC 200 Kompressor.

The CLC is the successor to the C-Class sports coupé, which has been purchased by approximately 320,000 customers around the world since 2001.

The majority of these customers were new to Mercedes-Benz. With its mix of approximately 70 percent new customers, the sports coupé is a very successful model in the Mercedes-Benz product offensive.

In addition, the two-door sports car has succeeded in keeping established customers loyal to the Mercedes-Benz brand, and over 60 percent of those who purchased it subsequently bought an even larger Mercedes-Benz model. C-Class sedans are produced in Germany at Mercedes-Benz plants in Sindelfingen and Bremen.

For more information, call Mercedes-Benz Global City at 415-7777 or Mercedes-Benz Greenhills at 722-3000 or visit www.mercedes-benz.com.ph.

MERCEDES-BENZ delivers 200,000 units of the new C-Class in the model's first sales year.

Mitsubishi to start selling electric cars next summer

MITSUBISHI MOTORS CORP will begin selling its electric car to individual customers in Japan from summer 2009, slightly ahead of schedule, banking on strong interest amid record-high fuel prices, the Nikkei business daily said.

The Japanese automaker, one of the front runners in the development of electric cars, had said it would begin offering the zero-emission car, called i-MiEV, mainly to fleet customers such as companies and to individuals no later than 2010.

A spokesman said the company was still studying the timing of the launch to customers, and a 2009 roll-out remained possible.

Mitsubishi Motors has said the electric car, based on the i-MiEV 4C gasoline-engine "i" minivehicle, would be priced at 2.3 million yen ($22,420-28,100).

Due to limitations of energy storage capacity in batteries, electric cars have a short cruising range and are considered most suited for short-distance driving.

Nissan Motor Co. and Renault SA are also aggressively promoting the possibility of electric cars, although it has not shown a prototype yet.

On Wednesday, the Franco-Japanese alliance signed a deal with Portugal to promote electric cars, following similar agreements with Israel and Denmark.

Nissan is looking to commercialize electric cars first in Japan and the United States in 2010. Reuters

THE 2009 LANCER ES's sporty styling would appeal to younger buyers.

RP compact sedan market's formidable foe

GREAT on look at any angle

and side airbags in the front row, two curtain airbags that extend to the second row and cuts for the driver's knee; adaptive front-lighting system (this is the technology that turns the headlight toward the direction the car is heading, boosting light around corners); high-intensity discharge headlamps; auto rain-sensing wiper; as well as auto lighting controls.

Think the 2009 Lancer ES is just a pretty face?

Mitsubishi made sure it also delivers sporty driving dynamics as well as good value for a car buyer willing to part his or her P1,325 million.

The 2009 Lancer ES now 2.0-liter DOHC Mivec 4-cylinder engine is among the most powerful to its segment, delivering 153 horsepower (at 6,000 rpm).

Lighter engine

Aluminum was extensively used on the cylinder block and on the cylinder head, creating an engine that is 27 kg lighter than the previous generation model that ran iron-block engine.

Aside from the improvements done on the engine, the car is also built on a longer wheelbase and wider track (although with a slightly shorter overall length than its predecessor).

Such a platform, shared with the Mitsubishi Outlander sport utility vehicle, contributed to the 2008 Lancer ES's stellar chassis and solid, stable handling capability as well as more road-hugging attitude.

Indeed, with its sleek new exterior look and invigorated performance, the 2008 Lancer ES should appeal to younger buyers seeking spirited driving. As for the rest seeking for their used sedans, the car's much-improved build quality and impressive luxury options should definitely lead them to Mitsubishi's doorsteps.

The superb Accord

MY DRIFT

Andre Fabros

OUT OF THE BIMAL HOOPing outfit and the likewise depressing economic situation comes a veritable that is not only relevant but one that is sharp as well. There is really no need to mince words when it comes to the new Honda Accord.

For an executive sedan segment that has had an excellent since capable fuel efficiency for as long as we can remember, this is a car with technology that makes a really good argument for the here and now.

Soul of the Accord

The soul of the Accord a its engine, an advanced unit designed to execute a very simple, refined and timely task. In wide open throttle, drivers get the punch and pull of a 3.5-liter V6 that puts out about 60 200 bhp and massive 342 lbs of torque. Flooring this engine reminds one of the Honda engines of old—power comes a little later but even lovely as peak power with a sonorous wail that makes you rev-rev.

For city-crawling, the engine lumps down to four cylinders and roughly 2.3 liters of displacement. Fuel is saved by electronically and mechanically detuning the engine intensity and cuts the fuel flow to the large action.

The rear view mirror almost disappeared with the front end by being subtracted and young. Aggressively slanted tail lamps, along with twin tailpipes hint at the youthful drive than looks under this car's pleated, rosbustion luxury wood suit enters, or.

Inside the Accord, the sedate and settled theme continues. Light khaki leather, textured polymer and wood laminates abound in this typically even, cocoa-color. Drivers are treated to dexterity from seats complete with powered adjustments and a telescopic steering wheel, allowing many to achieve the proper driving position. Passengers on the other hand are spoiled silly. Space is not an issue in the Accord's lounging area.

Driving impressions are initially typical of what one would expect from a large and heavy executive sedan. At almost 1.6 tons, nimble is not in the accords vocabulary, but neither is it completely wallowing. A certain amount of driver feedback and road holding is necessary in order to tame the Accord at half clip.

Acceleration seems luxurious, free and independent of the car's physical mass yet a single momentum stops one from driving this Accord like you evade. The engine is more than capable of getting this car up to speeds where the brakes are obviously at their limit of operation. It is really quite surprising that this car does not come equipped with larger calipers and rotors from the factory. Besides in a manner that seems to mind-fusing hard braking.

Typical executive sedan

In the 2008 Honda Accord, entrenched customers of the genre will find a familiar and typical executive sedan. They'll compare financing options, slush which of their golf bad, they already have one and decide which color will best match their collection of vintage cuff links. They would get lucky and pick the accord.

More enticing buyers will do their research, get in the driver's seat and hopefully realize that cars aren't merely accessories to take to the next board meeting. Cars are meant to drive well, provide a comfortable means of transport and at the very least, attempt to be fun. The Accord is all that.

2008 HONDA Accord

Goodyear named one of America's most respected companies

THE GOODYEAR TIRE AND Rubber Co. has been recognized as one of America's most respected companies by the Reputation Institute (RI) and Forbes magazine.

Goodyear ranked 16th on the magazine's third annual listing of companies with the best reputations in the United States, which was released on www.forbes.com.

The list is based on the results RI's Global Pulse consumer opinion survey, which measures the overall respect, trust, esteem, admiration and good feelings consumers hold toward the world's largest companies.

Scores are based on RI's seven dimensions of reputation: products/services, innovation, workplace, citizenship, governance, leadership and performance. RI said the 2008 survey indicates that consumers have high regard for the company's high-quality products and services as well as its governance and citizenship.

Goodyear's score of 78.8, represented a 7.5-point increase over 2007 and was the largest year-over-year improvement of any company on the list. Goodyear is the only tire company on the top 75 list.

Meaningful recognition

"This recognition is very meaningful," said Robert J. Keegan, Goodyear chief and chief executive officer. "It demonstrates that our strategy to offer high-quality innovative tires with consumer-relevant technology is resonating with American drivers," he said.

"Consumers put their trust in Goodyear every time they get behind the wheels of their cars. Every Goodyear associate appreciates and values that trust," Keegan said.

"When people trust, admire and have a good feeling about a company, they are willing to support and recommend the company to others," said Adrian Jaberdeen, RI managing director, in announcing the 2008 rankings.

Sits significant honor

The recognition from RI and Forbes is the fifth significant honor for Goodyear in 2008. The company was ranked the world's most admired company in the motor vehicle parts industry by Fortune magazine.

Audit Integrity Inc. and Forbes magazine ranked Goodyear sixth on their list of America's most trustworthy companies. The Wall Street Journal recognized Goodyear for leading shareholder returns for the past five years in the automotive category. Goodyear was also ranked among the Top 100 Corporate Citizens selected by CRO magazine.

BOREN

Manila 701 endurance race takes karting to a higher level

EXPERIENCE THE THRILL OF indoor karting with a mini spin on City Kart Racing stages Manila 701: The Crazy Race Second Edition on July 19 and 20. This is an endurance karting competition, where teams of at least four to nine drivers race to be the first to finish 701 laps inside the City Kart Racing track, the premier indoor karting facility in the Philippines.

Jean-Marc Fruhwirt, managing director of CKR and a former youth karting champion in France, says the event promises to deliver a different racing environment with unusual and interesting situations that one wouldn't find in a regular speed event.

"This is the real deal—with speedy pit-stalling and unusual driver changing. The fun is not just at the track but also at the frenzied events at the pit," he explains. "Endurance races provide adrenaline-infused excitement to both drivers and spectators. It enhances team spirit and more importantly, reveals the best team strategy."

Team race

Manila 701 is a race where teams compete for varying periods of time. There is no definite duration. It will continue until the race leader finishes the first 701 laps, making it very hard for the teams to secure pole-sitter and strategize. "This kind of race will test how flexible a team is and how well the driver react to the race conditions and surprise activities."

According to Fruhwirt, they have designed obstacles that will strain several road conditions that never happen on the racetrack, but do happen in real life.

"With real and awesome special effects, we will reproduce extreme weather and road conditions of the Philippines—from typhoons to soil erosion, landslides, strong rain, and blackouts. To add more fun, we are introducing new challenging conditions with mini traffic jams, heavily sandy, surprising detours and short shortcuts (no potholes). Drivers will have to brake and deal with these conditions during the race while keeping their focus to win."

Surprise obstacles

The "craziness," meaning the surprise obstacles, also happens to be unique to this kind of event in the Philippines. "You can't find this anywhere else in Asia, only at City Kart Racing. What will happen is really a big deal for racers. It is cool and safe but will really affect the track conditions as well as the lap time."

The race goes running from Saturday night, on July 19 until the following Sunday. "This will test the durability of the equipment and the resilience of the driver," Fruhwirt says. "Watch as super athletes emerge in this event. You will really discover the hidden racehorses in you."

While pit-stopping at the track, the hands fumbling by Smoothie and Counter Lore will entertain the party crowd, along with Dub Dis Darryl and Stefan. "You don't have to be a driver to also enjoy The Crazy Race," Fruhwirt exclaimed. "Hang out with a great set of people who will be cheering up to watch or participate in the race. This will truly be a unique experience."

Second home

Champion racer Pia Boren, who professes that City Kart is her second home, says she's looking forward to an even more exciting race as last year's, "Manila 701 is a fun race, fast and hectomic," she says.

"You have to keep your wits about you because as endurance race with obstacles will really test your skills. But at the end of it all, you want to have fun. That I think is what makes the karters come back for more even if an endurance race can really be punishing on your body," Boren adds.

Although Manila 701 promises to bring a high dose of playfulness, the race organizers will ensure that safety is still top. "It's a Crazy Race yes, but as always, City Kart Racing's first concern is safety. All special effects that will be used will not affect track conditions—they will be introduced to inject real fun and excitement while guaranteeing safety," Fruhwirt stresses.

Prepare for the event

He advises competitors to make sure they prepare properly for the event. "Those who aren't familiar with endurance karting may be surprised when you will find it you're training for a 1 or 2 hour race. Endurance is not only grueling; it can be hard on both your body and your kart if you're not properly trained."

Endurance karting is the most intense form of pa karting known that combines Nascar/Formula One style racing with karting. Endurance kart races have been known to be eight or more hours long for a single driver, so up to even 24 hours for teams of drivers. Because of the nature and time on a kart in endurance karting, special provisions must be made to ensure that your kart, together with your body lasts the whole race.

Endurance karts are customized by a pit crew during every race. Just like in any major car racing event, pit crews refuel and provide any needed maintenance at strategic stops during the event, and have today available to deal with mechanical malfunctions during the race. Karl teams are not only competing against each other in endurance karting, but against the best pound clocked times.

"Endurance karting requires excellence and stamina," Fruhwirt notes. "Even if you consider yourself a good karter, you have to practice because you don't know what surprises will hit you once race time," he adds.

For details on how to participate, log on to http://www.playkartracing.com or call 823-7687 for more information.

Prompt LTO driver's license issuance continues to benefit motorists

ONE WOULD RECALL THAT BEFORE THE 90s, obtaining a license takes normally a longer time.

Processing takes time as driver's licenses applied for in each of the agency's district and regional branches had to be forwarded to the central office in Diliman City, before being sent back again to each specific LTO branch for applicants to pick up. Delay also took toll in LTO's operation since packaging was made manually through laminated paper and cardboard, from which license cards were being made. There cards even posed problems as they were prone to forgery and frauds.

Technology

Thanks to the card production technology introduced by Mega Data Corp. and Amalgamated Motors of the Philippines Inc. (Ampi) in 1992, the Land Transportation Office has been issue breathing thousands of Filipino drivers through prompt 30-minute or less, upstairs of issuing driver's license nationwide. LTO cards used nowadays are even equipped with holder security features.

Through modernized and highly convenient Ampi-Mega's printing technology that can easily be set up in any LTO branch nationwide, LTO has successfully decentralized its driver's license processing operations, in turn reducing backlog in the delivery of services to the incoming public all over the country.

Through this technology as well, LTO was able to introduce one-stop license renewal kiosks all over the country being strategically located in commercial centers and shopping malls, the kiosks are very accessible to motorists who want for them to renew their licenses.

A leading innovator

His unrivaled all these achievements by LTO—through Ampi-Mega's technologies—earned praises from President Macapagal-Arroyo, citing the agency as one of the leading innovators in improving the delivery of service to the public. driver's licenses could now be renewed in 30 minutes or less—a true innovation from the long months this process used to take.

Of almost 12-million driver's license holders in the country, 3 million renew every year. Thus, LTO has truly been instrumental in efficiently delivering prompt services to Filipino drivers' nationwide.

MOTORING

E-mail: pi_motoring@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Cesar D. Manzanero

Drive and Dream

Don't waste that gas!

With gas prices escalating every week, vehicle owners should make the most out of every trip. And one way to save on gas is to increase your fuel mileage. Here are some helpful guidelines on how to maximize your fuel mileage:

KEEP TRACK OF YOUR MILEAGE

Make a record of when and how many liters of gas you put in your vehicle. This way, you'll be able to see your mileage consumption and determine if you are saving fuel on a weekly or monthly basis.

FILL IT UP

A full tank performs better than a half-filled tank. If the tank has less fuel, it takes time for it to reach the engine so gas will splash around while the car is in motion. Having a steady supply of gas will make your engine more efficient.

AVOID EXCESSIVE IDLING

A common mistake most drivers make is warming up their cars for a few minutes before hitting the road. Did you know that idling a vehicle wastes a significant amount of fuel? Warm up your vehicle by driving slowly within the neighborhood until it arrives at its proper operating temperature. During cold weather, warming up the vehicle may come in handy since it helps prevent idling a danger or worry that the engine is properly lubricated for driving. Don't start your engine too often as it may cause the starter motor and wiring to deteriorate quickly.

SPEED EFFICIENCY

Some cars get better mileage at specific speeds, usually at 80kph. You can't officially speed in the minimum speed at which it is running with its highest gear. Watch revolution per minute (RPM) gauge as you accelerate to determine when your tachometer is shifting into higher gears.

SYNTHETIC OIL ADDITIVE

Did you know that synthetic oil can save you an average of 5% gain? But be careful in changing it because the extended use of such lubricants can cause damage to the engine. In changing oil, make sure that you use the synthetic oil additive. You can increase your gas mileage by up to 10% more. Remember to always consult your car's manufacturers for motor tune and recommendations.

PAIN IN THE SHADE

Parking your car under the shade can save you from the heat. It can decrease fuel mileage by 20% or more.

DO THE (RIGHT) DISTANCE

Maintaining a safe distance between your car and the one in front of you is a basic traffic rule that can be useful in increasing your fuel mileage. Keeping a safe distance allows you to brake and accelerate gradually which are keys in saving gas. Just relax and hang back a bit; you are still traveling at the same speed as the car ahead of you even if you're not pace bumper.

OPTIONAL GEARING

There is a gear ratio that works well with the engine, the transmission, and the driving conditions of your car. If your daily route involves long distances or highways, try the higher gear or what is also known as numerically lower final drive ratio. It can be helpful in giving you high with the suggested rates as this can cause smaller engines to work too hard, thus causing damage to the engine in the process. Check also with your manufacturer if they offer optional gearing.

If you are planning to buy a new car, BPI Family Savings Bank's Drive Your Dream Auto loan is a great option to make that dream come true. As the industry leader in auto lending, its Drive Your Dream Auto Loan offers low interest rates and flexible payment terms to help consumers get their dream car. Buyers can own a brand new car worth P600,000 for only P6,328 a month with only 20% down payment and right payment term of six years.

BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK

BMW is selling the Hummer. It's poetic justice for gas-guzzling SUVs, its value desperately needs more capital.

'A violent change' and 'a punch in the face'

(From cover)

"A VIOLENT CHANGE" IS how Lee Iacocca, in his autobiography, called the shift in consumers' demand to small cars after the 1979 oil shock. With history repeating itself this year via skyrocketing oil prices and slumping motor vehicle sales, a trusted Swiss industry analyst remarked, after Ford Motor's announcement that it wouldn't break even by 2009 as planned, "Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the face and a $4 gas price is a punch in the face."

As a second swing hit a gallon (3.8L) a liter or (998.2N, gasoline is still cheaper in the United States than in other countries including the Philippines. Moreover, Americans enjoy higher income rates than we do. But gas prices are still acute for American motorists, considering that the majority drive large, sport utility vehicles and big pickup trucks that average 14 miles per gallon (5.89 kilometers per liter). For full-size SUV and truck owners, a full (23 gallons) tank of gas costs $100 now, truly "a punch in the face."

Light trucks

The "punch in the face" is causing another "violent change" in consumer behavior in the biggest auto market in the world. Even big SUVs and pickups, collectively known as light trucks, to smaller, fuel-efficient passenger cars and crossovers (combined SUVs.) In July 2005, light trucks peaked to 61 percent of new car sales, representing more than 12 million vehicles sold annually. But in May 2008, light trucks plunged to 44 percent of new car sales, the first time they fell below 50 percent since 2001, which means that only six million SUVs and pickups will be sold in 2008.

Detroit's Big Three are hurting since they depend on light trucks for most of their profits, selling as much as $10,000 per unit sold. With every new plant built in recent years being a truck plant, General Motors, Ford and Chrysler are scrambling to change their production lines by lifting truck factories and adding shifts to small car factories that are already operating at full capacity. The problem is that the Big Three don't manufacture enough fuel-efficient models in the United States to meet surging consumer demand, leaving the auto makers open for Asian rivals like the fuel-sipping Toyota Prius gasoline-electric hybrid, Honda Civic, Honda Fit, Honda Accord, Toyota Corolla, Toyota Yaris and Toyota Camry hybrid.

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla Mendoza

Detroit's Big Three are hurting since they depend on light trucks for most of their profits

Unprepared

But even Toyota Motor Corp. was caught unprepared for a "violent change" in consumer behavior last month, sales of the Tundra, its full-size truck, skidded 30 percent while inventories of the Tundra and Toyota's large SUV, the Sequoia, bulged. Just last week, Toyota announced it would suspend truck production at two US plants, considering Tundra production at one factory in 2009 and producing the Prius hatchback at a new plant in Mississippi instead of the Highlander SUV since US dealers had a six-month waiting list for the Prius. There was also a shortage of the Camry hybrid, Corolla and Yaris due to record demand.

Meanwhile, GM may have signaled the end of the SUV era when it announced last month that it was selling the Hummer, the poster boy for gas-guzzlers, closing four SUV and pickup plants in 2009, ramping up small car production and reaffirming its commitment to the Chevrolet Volt plug-in electric/hybrid compact car.

Outsold

At about the same time, Ford's SUV sales plummeted 35 percent, pickups slumped 41 percent and for the first time in 38 years, Ford's F-150 pickup lost its title as the best-selling car or truck in the United States, having been outsold by midsize cars in May. Ford timed the launch of the redesigned F-150 from September to November and slashed production for the second time in two months—moves that suggest Ford is bracing for a bigger loss this year than its $1.7 billion lost in 2007.

For the first time in decades, Chrysler's market share fell below 10 percent in its sales dropped 30 percent in June. Despite plunging truck sales, Chrysler is launching its redesigned best-selling pickup, the Dodge Ram, this fall. While many of its product portfolio is SUVs and pickups and 90 percent of its sales in the US market, Chrysler is reeling from the "violent change" and has not unveiled. Chrysler is tapping a $1.5-billion credit line from private equity firm Cerberus, which acquired Daimler's 80 percent stake in Chrysler last year for less than a quarter of the original price.

Pressure

Some optimists think that the "violent change" is cyclical since it is based on a volatile quantities, the price of gasoline. But before GM's annual meeting in Wilmington, Delaware, GM Chair Rick Wagoner said: "We don't believe it's a spike or a temporary shift. We believe it is permanent." The era of cheap oil is over and with it the era of the full-size SUV and pickup truck. That's good news for environmentalists even in this Third World country for Filipinos spe. the Americans in our trading habits.

(Sources: International Herald Tribune, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Reuters)

(NEXT: Survival and profiting from

FORD'S F-150 pickup truck is no longer the best-selling motor vehicle in the U.S.

LIFESTYLE Home & Entertaining

Editor Thelma Sevaro San Juan

BEDROOM has white and earth-tone scheme. Butterflies are pinned on the mosquito net which drapes from the ceiling. Recycled objects such as a lamp made from a church narthex and old capiz windows on the balcony are used as accents.

How Dita built eco-friendly getaway

Advocate of natural fibers walks her talk

By Margs C. Enriquez
Contributor

FASHION DESIGNER Dita Sandico Ong, proponent of natural fabrics made from banana fibers and the hybrid pineapple linen, walks her talk.

All her clothes in the skin breeder and her interior and outdoor designs always incorporate nature. Her sanctuary is San Mateo, Rizal, a half hour's drive from her residence, emboldens the green living.

"I needed an escape but within 30 minutes away from my resident zone. It's a bank in Indira Ghandi—no technology, just nice music and an herbal garden," says Ong.

Nestled amid the low clouds, the 300-sq.m. house was built on the slope of the family property; it offers a circular panorama of the valley. It was done in collaboration with creative di-

Thoughts on Golf and Life

By Regi Bonifacio Ureta

I THINK ANY GUY WHO HATE THAT LIFE AS a corporate executive is hectic probably can't think of anything better to say. Why state the obvious?

It was when I was in the middle of my pre-shot routine while I lifted my fingers one by "perfect grip", focused on my downtrun and commanded my muscles into the perfect position, visualized how the ball would fly perfectly in the air and land right on target, and wiggled my club perfectly (3 times for luck), when Cris jolted me back to reality with his shouted comment did I curse with the utmost timing — but perfectly timed my shot.

Kenneth, Marc and I started to ignore what Cris had said, and carried on with an otherwise perfect day of golf. But since he had already opened a can of worms, it seemed fair picking

those off the fairways once and for all, was the better option. Part of me wanted to tell him "You're tired of your work? Then quit.

But I didn't. Because I knew he couldn't. In the same way I mimic other man I was walking to hole 9 with, simply couldn't.

We all had to make a living, otherwise known as chasing-off

for 12 or more hours a day, trying to earn enough money to put food on the table, send the kids to exclusive schools, pay for the amortization of the new house, the new car, the country club membership, and that Europe cruise we've unwittingly promised the missus... and all those other things that seem or has come up with "perfect" life.

Beyond that. There was the [illegible] I've been playing golf with since [illegible] from ex-jobs [illegible] clubs, riddled with [illegible] at work or what-have-[illegible] — we still continue to golf. Yes, that sport which some people could so easily regard as a rich guy's game where a person uses his time hitting a ball as far as he could—only to follow it afterwards.

Where the players go for hours on end under the sweltering heat of the sun (even under pouring rain for others). And where the ultimate goal is to shoot the ball into an unbelievably far and almost impervious hole in one perfect shot (heavy stress: impossible, but still... golfers try.

At this point, it's so easy for anyone to ask "What's the point?"

But perhaps the best way to answer the question is to try the game itself. Because though a swing may seem effortless, numerous calculations have been at play. While other people see the manicured greens, golfers see the subtle slopes and think of how they could affect how the ball would roll.

And while others may see a ball flying aimlessly in the air, in our heads we've already pictured where it would fall. One plunges into a world of complexities while making a conscious effort to focus on making that perfect shot. It's a paradox that reveals its simplicity once you fall in love with the game.

It would've turned into a more serious discussion were it not for Marc, the optimist, who blurted out, "Pre, we could just pick the ball up, shoot it in the hole and it'll be over. But where's the fun in that?"

No one bothered to dig up the profound connection the music of life with, or life in general, but for that moment, it was enough to let us enjoy the game once more.

SAWFIELD — BY JOY DAVIS

A. LIPIN — BY JESS ABRERA

FULDOK — BY RAFLAND TATUNPALAMBUNG

PUGAD BABOY — BY PH. JUNIOR

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN RABULANI

PINOYKOMIKS — BY JOHNS TEJERO

GILAPHIN — BY DARWIN PEREZ

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMO AND WABOY — BY LYRA GARCELLANO

LOVEKNOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHOENGLI

KOKO MACHINE — BY MANDE ABRERA

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Tenth president
5 Linguine
sauce
9 Enamel
14 Ax-wielding
15 Hot in food
16 Commitments
17 Inside of the ...
18 Sandra Day ...
19 "Star Trek: Voyager" character
21 Mexican mealworm
22 Turkish title
23 Unknown Genevieve
24 Dancing device
25 Everyday
27 Prince of the ...
28 Hero's alter ego
29 Bartender's tray
30 Cereal bowl
31 Ms. Ryan of "Star Trek: Voyager"
32 Ocean motion
33 Stock-market
term
35 Rotten smooth, locally
37 Chopped
39 Chemical suffix
40 Atmosphere
membrane
42 Greek letter
43 Dairy & the ...
44 Hard-hat project
47 Bottled-up
48 Bridge and
Hearts
51 Fit
52 Impact
53 "Knot bad"
54 Critical part
55 Lyric & the ...
56 Radio waves
57 Actress Ito
58 Atmospheric
membrane
59 Cellular material
60 Horse mounter
61 Horse, poll

DOWN
1 Mountain
2 Against the law
3 Beholder
4 Counterpart
spots
5 "Nurse and
Generosity"
painter
6 "Sister!"
7 1,000 English
pounds
8 "All set, attention
9 Very Foreign
language
10 Main or Maple
11 Beatrix's target
portfolio
12 Hard to it
arrangements
13 Lutfisk or
Limburger, once
20 Stock-broker
abr.
21 Plastic meadow
22 Antiquity visit
24 Muslim prayer-
leader
26 Planet
28 Mediterranean
fly
30 1,223 sweets
31 Goddess of
deliverance
32 Mischievous
one
33 Mark of name
(on)
34 Bedtime
visitor?
36 Lacrosse
41 Mission
42 Prospective
meeting
43 Vehement
45 Ms. Lupino
46 Actress Wynn
47 Actor or actor
48 Ms. Lupino
49 Ms. Lupino
50 Ms. Lupino
51 Clairvoyant
52 In the sky
53 Clemente
54 Ozone
55 "Lonesome
Lonnie"

By Michael T. Williams — 7/16/08
Universeler, PL

Sunday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

EQUINOX CODE: Remember you do. You have fun and adventure, and you're very romantic. You have some need and you sometimes turn restless listening to your feelings on your intellect. Where do you want to go? Who do you want to be with? Your ruling planet is considerably social and friendly. Accept all invitations and enjoy yourself.

Equinox of Tony Kushner, playwright, and Hannah Jaffee, Stewart Goodman, Business

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Treat your self to a new shirt or dress today. Don't be afraid to make practical, cost-conscious decisions to boost yourself or feel better.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Communication about travel or getting away from it all is favored today. Making arrangements for yourself and others are positive career trends. Why not find out what's offered?

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You have excellent mental powers today. Use them to manage the classroom or others today. You also might see long-term rewards of making investments with others.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might not feel like being responsible to others today. However, you might seek advice from someone older. An empathetic friend is a good choice.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Get the advice to make experienced, professional decisions. Look forward with something to do. Relax on the shoulders of others who have been where you are. Confidence from others.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You're soothing. Use it wisely to connect responsibility. Be careful in sports, dealings or anything serious. Don't be afraid to be a hospitality industry. Just do it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You're very connect with practical matters today, especially on the home front or others your family. Minimize stress while need grandparent or someone older could be a good idea.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're in a phase with other friends or organizations. Don't be afraid to take a long-range view of something. It's a good day for networking and [illegible].

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Work is looking good. Nothing more about discussions and the day after tomorrow are good to immediate results. You need to discuss matters as a group process.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You're in your element today. Socializing over with the kids is also advice to others. Be careful with [illegible] advice from someone who is older, wiser and more experienced.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're good to a good day to do. If you can manage to relax, this it's not always that easy to do. Enjoy yourself.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Talk to a female friend—preferably someone older or more experienced. Don't be afraid to be a friend. Enjoy... advice a personal issue to do. You (and this) will welcome friendly help.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — By Dave Green

	7	6	5				9	3
		3	4	9		6	7	
				6		8		
			1	5	2			
		4				5		
1	9		6				2	
9							8	
	5	2	9				1	
			8	7			3	

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.conceptis.com

Answer to previous puzzle

3	1	4	5	9	2	8	7	6
6	2	5	4	8	7	3	9	1
9	7	8	6	1	3	2	4	5
4	9	1	8	7	6	5	3	2
5	8	7	3	2	4	9	1	6
2	6	3	9	5	1	4	6	7
7	5	6	2	3	9	1	8	4
8	4	9	1	6	8	7	5	3
1	3	2	7	4	5	6	2	9

Need luck in your relationship?

Do this home ritual

By Rica Fernando Regis
Contributor

ARE YOU NOT SATISFIED with things that are happening in your life? Would you want to create a change in your health, relationships or financial situation?

The following energizing ritual for the home, which has always worked for me, may just be what you need.

For a start, clean your closets and dispose of clothes you have not used for one year. Scrub clean the rest of the house while getting rid of all the clutter. Rearrange the furniture. Then take a bath and don your favorite attire.

Create an altar with flowers and sacred symbols where you can light a candle (the element). Light an incense (air element). While fervently and silently inviting your intention, walk barefoot around the house. As you ring a bell, spray spring water (water element) and throw salt (earth element) into the nooks and corners of your home.

This is similar to a home blessing, except that you are your own priestess (or priest) actively visualizing your prayer.

In her book "Sacred Space," Denise Linn says "Our homes are mirrors of ourselves. They reflect our interests, beliefs, horizons, our spirit and our passion. It is a place where you can interface with the universe, a crossing point in time and space that can attract energy or repel energy."

Karen Rogaros, author of "Creating Sacred Space with Feng Shui," also states, "Everything in your sensei life, especially your home environment, has an effect on you, from the smallest consonant to the largest design structure. Your home is the living portrayal of what's happening in your life."

I visited a friend in California who, although 10 years divorced, was still in constant verbal conflict with his ex-wife. He also had just broken off his engagement with a current flame that had been running seven years.

His garage was filled with things from his previous marriage. His living space was like a warehouse of furniture.

I asked his permission to move things around, to his delight. My simple initiative caused my four-day visit into a major spring cleaning and energizing ritual.

It must have worked, because a few months after my return to Manila, he wrote that he had a new girlfriend. It has been five years since, and they have become happily married.

My mother is 82, but she looks so much younger. Although she sometimes walks with a cane, she has a straight back and has a joyful disposition. When I visited her in our hometown two years ago, she looked cold and was suffering from arthritis, a pinched nerve and an allergic cough.

It was then that I undertook a major clean-up and renovation of our 100-year-old ancestral home, where energies stagnated in the nooks and corners of the abode. Despite her resistance, we disposed of all the old and meaningless items she was attached to.

The influx of new furniture, appliances, linen and decor for her home sent by the family must have opened up new energies. My mother felt a new sense of abundance, satisfaction and excitement. Now, I no longer have her coughing.

Everything is energy. We are immersed in an ocean of energy, inside us and around us. When we change our inner reality, such change is reflected in our outer reality. Thus, we can alter the circumstances in our life by transforming the energy field in our living environment.

Where a family shares meals and good conversation

FOR CENTURIES, THE DINING table has been a place where families gather to share a meal and good conversation.

It is said that some very early tables were made by Egyptians, and were little more than metal or stone platforms used to keep objects off the floor. The Greeks and Romans made room throughout use of tables for eating—with the Greeks pushing them under a bed after use, and the Romans using large semicircular tables. It was in the 16th century when long refectory tables appeared in Europe for large banquets to gather.

Today the dining room continues to be a place where family members and friends eat together, talk together, and bond together.

Our House, the family room where one can get great designs at great prices, has a wonderful range of dining sets to suit your personal taste and dining style. Whether classic or contemporary, wood or glass, these are great for intimate dinner, family get-together or entertaining at home.

Here are some dining at home tips.

•Dinner duo. Share an intimate dinner for two on a contemporary table with orange finish. Add a crystal vase filled with roses and some wine for a romantic setting.

•Glass ideas. Glass top tables complement modern homes. A wooden table with glass top has grace, balance and comfort in its design. The fusion of glass and wood has a quality of prettiness, elegance and sophistication.

You can also have an enjoyable breakfast in your garden with a glass top outdoor table with chrome base and chic bistro-style metal chairs (black and white).

•Modern dining. A sleek and sophisticated white table with an extendable leaf is great for entertaining in small spaces like condos or townhouses. Minimalist in design and matched with sculptural seats, these highlight the feel of modern living.

•Tutorials. If you like innovations in design, check out tables with the combination of dark wood and whiter suede linen stained wood basements. The seats not only enhance the accent, but also gives more ways to enhance your design options.

•Table talk. Transform your interior from drab to dramatic with a round table and four stylish chairs in your dining area. This contemporary styled set will work well with both small and large spaces and is great for small families.

Dining sets are available at Our Home stores in Metro Manila, those are at SM Megamall, SM City Fairview, SM Southmall, S-Mall, The Block at SM City North Edsa and SM Mall of Asia. In the provincial areas, there are at SM Supermalls in Bacoor, Pampanga, Clark, Iloilo, Lucena, Baguio, Marilao, Dasmariñas, Batangas, Cebu and Cagayan de Oro.

WOODEN dining table in orange finish and crystal vase with long-armored cut roses for a romantic evening

CONTEMPORARY glass and chrome dining table for outdoor breakfasts

SLEEK, modern dining table with two extensions, ideal for small areas like condos and pads

FUSION of glass and wood took elegance and refinement.

BEST FOR BABY

Watsons

30% OFF
Watsons Baby Bath Mild Hypoallergenic, 1Ph-Balanced 5 Reg. Price: P229.00

30% OFF
Watsons Baby Bath Lavender Hypoallergenic, Ph-Balanced 5 Reg. Price: P229.00

30% OFF
Watsons Baby Powder Pink 100g Reg. Price: P79.00

30% OFF
Watsons Baby Bath Milk Hypoallergenic 100ml Reg. Price: P69.00

30% OFF
Watsons Baby Travel Kit (Milk Lotion, Milk Bath & Shampoo) Reg. Price: P190.00

Great savings on baby care essentials from Watsons Label!

BASKID artist Frank Salcedo's huge kamagong salad bowl is made into a lavatory set-on a counter of the same material. Bamboo shades purchased from the Quiapo bridge serve as bathroom partition.

BANANA fiber sheaths done by Colombanos weavers not only conceal rafters but also prevent bats from nesting on the ceiling and fouling droppings on the floor. The playful focal point is a rococo chandelier, designed by Antonio Soto Sanvic, crafted from recycled tin and old heads. The fabrics used are all natural, such as Dita Sandico Ong's hand-painted pineapple linen-named on the abaca table and orchid, the bed pillows. Wood items such as the chairs, low benches and an Ifugao chair lend a rustic ambience to the spa by decor.

How Dita built eco-friendly getaway

TO MAKE the bathtub a sanctuary, it is adjacent to the meditation corner. Colored shells adorn the natural fiber shades.

THE ART Dita does upon to the guest room. Simple appointments can be made stylish by combining antique pieces. A chair bordering provides a reserved office. Dress up a humble bed with Mangyan covers.

ADD romance to a corridor with the contrast of lush wraps of banana fiber and tinted shades. The woven fenestrate look is twist and coloring. The flooring, made of woven sliced cane plants, complements the bamboo shades. Dress up the doorways, recycled from an old home, with bird-shaped door accessories made from pineapple fiber.

ACTIVISM modern in design and materials, Ong's house reflects the typical Filipino home with a strong relationship and second floor living quarters. Tropical foliage borders the periphery.

FLAMBOYAN groundfloor vines creeping from the carport grille on the balcony provide a natural shade. An old sewing machine from the designer's atelier is recycled into a table by painting it silver and installing a marble top. Woven Elsa Reyes' linen and bamboo fabrics make silky roman shades for the glass partitions.

Ecoparagraph

terior Antonio Soto Sanvic as design consultant, with architect James Ramospino.

Her formula is simple:

- A basic, modular environ-dwell.
- Do-it-yourself task over carpenter) wooden furniture.
- Filled new area for old items.
- Invest color and patterns, to keeping with the organic look.
- Source accessories with a sustained easy appeal.
- To pull it off, be conscious of size and proportion.

The main consideration was the material. Since the house was surrounded by fruit trees, a wooden house would invite termites.

Hence, the concrete and steel dwell, softened by bamboo poles for rustic touch and nonabsorbent ceramic tiles for flooring.

Green design

Embodying the green design, the house has plenty of cross-ventilation from the wide expanse of glass walls inviting windstream.

Old woods such as narra, kamagong, molave, railroad ties, antique doors and capiz windows—retrieved from ancestral homes—are used judiciously.

The furniture, mostly low beds and benches, are also built from reused woods. Tree roots are shaped into stools and low tables.

For Ong's mattress, lots of linen evenly distributes the height for a soft bed.

To evoke closeness to the elements, natural fibers are utilized for coverings such as the abel Iloko or the Ifugao woven blanket, Mangyan textiles, weaver Elsa Reyes' linens for shades, and Ong's signature organic fabrics.

Views provide natural curtains since they filter the sunlight and have a cooling effect.

For finishing touches, the uses decorative accessories to pull the whole scheme together.

These range from a painting of a wood nymph on the corridor to welcome visitors, to raw glass as table centerpieces, or wine bottles used as candleholders or recycled lamps.

Ong also puts her personal touch—among dragonflies on her mosquito net, adding beads and banana fiber petals on her metal stands and shells on shades.

By keeping things uncomplicated, her furnishing can be changed minimally. The proof of a successful interior design. She can even clean the house herself.

Cyber fair features cool gadgets and gizmos

BEST CYBER DAY! BIRTH... JULY 31 #1 Forum Robinsons, Pioneer corner Edsa, Mandaluyong. Be updated on the latest in computers, laptops, printers, mp3 players, cameras. Participating brands include Asus, Intel, Acer, Epson, Lenovo, Samsung, ASRock, Belkin, Canon, iPod, Kingston, Lacie, Linksys, M&S Master, Philips Go Gear, Palm, PLDT My SIM, Polaroid and Seagate. Call 6836263 or 6836 1001 locals 791 or 792.

Polymer seminar

An introductory course on figurine-making, fimoplast, enamel glaze and other polyester resin products will be held July 24-26. Call 9218852 to 58.

'Sandosenang Saputon' at CCP and Valenzuela

The Dalandanan City Center for the Performing Arts presents an original musical based on the award-winning book of Dr. Luis Gatmaitan titled "Sandosenang Saputon," Andre Tiongson directs the musical written by Jose Jeffrey Cruz-mansig. It stars Lois "Kuya Bubs" Pascua, with Jenee Lorenz as theatrical director. The story highlights how love can strengthen a family and how it can transcend the boundaries of super heroes to create a vision of flawlessness. The play takes the audience to a magical world of heroes, dancers and babylike-like mood at the same time presenting the harsh reality of life. "Sandosenang Saputon" will be staged on July 24 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines and on all Saturdays of August at the Valenzuela City Cesita Yor the Performing Arts. Call 2726 600.

Induction of RP-British Society officers

Frank Evenson, exec leader and president of Ateji Lakad Foundation, was installed president of the Philippine British Society with Howard Bellorin as vice president. Also elected to the board of trustees were Emmanuel Santos, secretary; Andrew Wallace, treasurer; Victoria Montilla, Peter Gutter, Dave Espiritu, Andrew Pidcock, Nina Lucas, H. Barry Cumberland and David Reynolds, directors. British Ambassador Peter Hocking was introduced the new PBS officers on July 21, 6:30 p.m., at the Ambassador residence in Forbes Park, Makati.

Privilege meetings

The Peninsula Manila offers an exclusive setting for board meetings, corporate events, product launches, seminars and family celebrations that is loaded with special deals with the Privilege Meetings Package. Rewards Program. Validity of the Privilege Meetings Package is from June 1 to Dec. 30. Call events manager at 8873888, extension 6521.

Triumph in lingerie fashion

In light of the time "triumph inspiration" event, triumph international Philippines most recently with De La Salle College of St. Benilde School of Design & Arts has recently concluded a local competition among its Fashion Design students. Representing triumph Philippines in the finals is Ralph Ng. He bagged first place with his sash and Swarovski crystal-embellished lingerie piece entitled Diwa. He will represent the Philippines in the finals on July 31 in Beijing, China where fashion design students from over 20 countries will compete.

LIFESTYLE

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

Our designers add flair to outdoor living in Frankfurt fair

Text and photos by Alec T. Vergara

AS MORE AND MORE Europeans take to "outdoor living," the region's lucrative furniture and home accessories market is slowly spilling over from the living room to the lanai and beyond in a liberal way.

And several leading Filipino manufacturers and designers are responding to this trend by producing "natural-looking" high-end pieces designed to orchestrate the elements or blend with the outdoors.

And if the recently concluded "Ascension Life," a four-in-one event held annually in Frankfurt, Germany, was any indication, Filipinos were again in step with the saga.

Among their featured pieces were rattan-wood chairs fashioned from water-resistant "sachwella" fabric and synthetic fibers that mimicked the feel and color of rattan, by Evolve and Locsin International. Also lightweight jars, water features and garden pieces made of recovered wood, by Artemisse, Inc.

Cebu-based companies Jaam Habitat Export, Inc., which featured nature-inspired accent pieces made of recycled glass, and Catalina, Inc., which did upright lamps fashioned from seashells, recovered components and biodegradable plastic, also generated their fair share of inquiries.

Mirror objects, either framed in mosaic pieces made of polished seashells or fashioned, Venetian-style, into furniture and table accessories, by Primo and Brad, Inc. and Not For Shabby, Inc., respectively, also held their own. The former has been joining the Frankfurt event for almost 30 years now.

"I would have skipped joining a long time ago if those fairs didn't produce results," said Rene Abada, owner and designer of Primo and Brad. "We answer how established you are, you have to be constantly out there to generate new buyers

CONTINUED ON D2

FURNITURE designer and Fairs & More design consultant Tony Gonzales and Fairs & Hues VP for International Fairs Wilbert Moreno at Messe Frankfurt

Function & Style!
3 Phones, 3 Lines only for P999

from SUN & SAMSUNG

Samsung C520 Features:
VGA Camera • FM Radio • Mobile Tracker
• SOS Message • Calendar • Calculator
• To-Do List • Voice Memo • Games

Get 3 phones, 3 lines
24/7 Call & Text Unlimited*
750** FREE texts to other networks
All for P999/month!***

Hurry to The Sun Shop and apply now!
Only one person needs to subscribe to get all the lines.
When applying for your postpaid line, simply bring a valid ID and the latest computation (all equivalent to at least the plan being applied for). If computation is not available, bring proof of billing and proof of income.
Also available at Plan 350***
* Local Sun-to-Sun calls and texts only
** When enrolled in Call & Text Unlimited
*** 24-month installment period
Available Samsung C520 colors

Hotline: 395-8888 • www.sunshop.com.ph
SAMSUNG Club
SAMSUNG
SUN CELLULAR
Sana ganyan, sana dito

OUR LOWEST TRANSACTION FEE EVER*
to anywhere in Pinas
AS LOW AS P19 NA LANG!
WESTERN UNION
* Terms and conditions apply. Promo period from May 5 to July 31, 2008.
© 2008 Western Union Holdings, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
For inquiries, call 888-1200 (Metro Manila) or 1-800-1-888-1200 (Provinces)

HAMILO Coast's units sport earthy colors to complement the location's fine sand, weather-washed driftwood and natural rocks, providing an elegant yet casual and comfortable feel.

'Outback chic' defines Batangas hideaway

FUTURE RESIDENTS OF Pico de Loro Cove in Hamilo Coast can look forward to leaving their busy city lives for tranquil weekends. At this premier eco-tourism project in Maragondon, Batangas, the promise of true relaxation is in the designs of all the condo units and facilities in development.

According to project investor developer Mariano Tuason, the units carry an "outback chic" motif with earthy colors to complement the fine sand, weather-washed driftwood and natural rocks and provide an elegant yet casual and comfortable feel.

Even the selection of furniture and furnishings are made simple, a bit rustic but most of all user-friendly. Weather-washed wood, simple but responsive porcelain tiles and natural stainless are also used for this purpose.

"The purpose of the unit as a second home is to allow occupants to de-stress. We envisioned a very informal, rather casual surrounding for people who would occupy these homes as their holiday escape from the hustled and mundane city life. It has a very understated elegance. We like the occupants to drop their resistance and come out fresh and recharged after spending time there," explains Tuason.

Hamilo Coast sets out to become the country's largest integrated coastal community with a balanced mix of residential, commercial and recreational amenities. The property features a panorama of horizons of soft white sand, 13 coves of varying sizes, shapes and character, private bays, limestone cliffs, virgin forests and rock formations.

"The design does not compete with nature. You could look out into your balcony and you feel nature from where you are standing. No bright colors or odd shapes to distract you from nature. You come to this place to appreciate and be with nature. The rustic and weathered look of the design will hopefully be enhanced as the units age and the patina of time is acquired. Not much complicated upkeep and maintenance is required," adds Tuason.

Other facilities such as Pico de Loro Beach & Country Club carry the same architecture, wherein nature and the interior almost blend as one and the materials used are not left behind. "Service has been a prime consideration in all the designs in this development. Silence could be our best friend if treated and appreciated properly," he says.

Hamilo Coast is an eco-tourism project of Casa del Hamilo Inc., a subsidiary of SM Investments Corp.

FUN AT PLAY

Skip & hop your way to the children's shoes department... and check out the latest collection of rubber shoes and sneakers from TOM & JERRY and TWEETY. Fun and stylishly cool, your kids will be jumpin' around with joy! Not just stylish, these comfy pairs were made for the wear and tear of active kids.

Let your kids have fun with their fave characters TOM & JERRY and TWEETY. Shop now at the nearest SM Department Store's Kids Shoes section. Who knows, you and your kid can be the NEXT SM MILLIONAIRE.

New Bicol hotels

THE OPENING OF HOTEL Venezia in Legazpi City recently and inauguration of Discovery Bay Mikabu in Cagraray Island, Albay in the fourth quarter of 2008 are part of the expansion of HIAI Entrenz in the Bicol region.

The Venezia opening follows the upgrading of the boutique hotel in Legazpi City. For the renovation, guest rooms were outfitted with LCD televisions, cable channels and Wi-Fi facilities. Also renovated were function rooms and Café San Marco restaurant, which showcases the regional cuisine with an Italian twist.

"Hotel Venezia will introduce a new level of service and style that will appeal to both business and leisure travelers to this booming city," said Annabelle Wisniewski, president of HIAI Entrenz.

Venezia, which incorporates complimentary Wi-Fi in public spaces and high-speed Internet access in all guest rooms for a minimal fee, has three flexible meeting spaces. It also features a swimming pool and business suites.

Situated in the heart of Legazpi City, it is only two minutes away from the airport and is close to several business and government offices. The hotel offers complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport and also offers package tours of Mount Mayon, cave adventure, whale shark interaction, half-day city tours, among others.

Discovery Bay Mikabu has been accredited by the Small Luxury Hotels of the World (slh.com). It will feature separate villas facing the beach or poolside. Amenities include LCD televisions with cable channels, DVD/CD players, luxurious bathrooms, iPod docks, safety deposit box, mini bar and Wi-Fi access in public spaces. Services include 24-hour butler service, pool and beach butlers, 24-hour room service and concierge.

Flora and fauna garden expo 2008

DESERT zones with landscaping by Serapion Pineda

THE PHILIPPINE International Flora and Fauna Garden Expo 2008 will be held July 18-20 at World Trade Center, Pasay City.

Expo theme is "Bringing Back Interest."

The show promotes the appreciation of plants and animals and raises public awareness on plant care and maintenance.

International and local horticulturists, ornamental plants and flowers growers, landscape designers, collectors of rare plants and breeders of birds, butterflies, bees, fishes, snakes, reptiles and other pets will be some of the participants, including members of the Philippine Horticulture Society, Phil. Orchid Society, Cactus and Succulent Society, King Louis Flowers and Plants, Klein's Flora Arts, Phil. Association of Landscape Architects, Green 2000 and Lacap.

Exotic animals from Avilon Zoo will be transported into the landscape exhibits.

There will be exhibits of nature-based products for health, beauty and wellness, cosmetology and recreation.

Growers of indigenous products and souvenir items, new Filipino inventors, proprietors of nature and leisure resorts will also participate.

There will be lectures and seminars as well as competitions in landscaping and photography.

Call Noel Mallari at 0917-800-1088 or Michael Cervera at 0922-7015553.

Our designers add flair
to outdoor living in Frankfurt fair

Francesca Ki

and remind old ones you're still in business. You have to excite them by giving them something non-every-time."

Sue Tio-Diablito owner and designer Lira Soares has been joining fairs in the US for years now, but it was only her second time to present in Frankfurt. Like most of her fellow Filipino exhibitors, Aimee lamented the fact that her company doesn't receive any form of government support.

"We have to reach out on our own to other markets because no one is going to do that for us," she said. "I consider myself lucky because my Art Deco-inspired products have found a ready market in Europe and the Middle East."

She produces "universal" items for both markets. But while Europeans tend lean towards antique-finished products, Arabs go for close and conventional styles.

Shift to Europe

From before the ongoing recession in the US became a hot theme trading, Janet Minor Export has been aggressively in search of new markets in Europe. Thanks to its local-ear foresight, the company is able to weather efforts of the weak dollar and the current downturn in US demand.

"The US has been our major market for the longest time," said Lolibeth Dolmoso, one of the company's account handlers. "But we can't afford to ignore Europe, more so now, because our US market has been shrinking."

Most, if not all, the exhibitors also join local fairs in Manila. Through the years, however, attendance among buyers and sellers in these fairs has dwindled, making it necessary for them to show abroad, including Frankfurt.

Each Filipino company in Frankfurt reportedly spends somewhere between P400,000 and P600,000—a fraction perhaps of what they would normally spend in local and international—to join the city's shows.

Despite the considerable expense, seasoned exporters like Rebecca Locsin of Locsin International find established fairs abroad well-worth the investment.

Produced by Messe Frankfurt and organized locally by Sun & Shire, Inc., a subsidiary company of the European Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines, the five-day event gathers buyers and sellers of furniture and accent pieces under one roof (several roofs, actually, as it was held in a number of huge halls).

The fair, a sister event of the much bigger "Ambiente," also featured a number of companion dining fashion accessories as well as new product ideas from up-and-coming designers.

For the first time in its history, Messe Frankfurt introduced "Business," its newest "mini-event" given for the crunch and need sub-zoned lighting to better highlight the products.

"I always tell them to make their displays working and not trade-like," said Gonzales. "Through the years, most of them have learned how to merchandise their products and project them."

To ensure that they get only the best re-

ARNE Alcala of Peter and Paul, Inc., and his wrought-iron wall decor

NGUYEN sisters of Vietnam-based Thien Thanh Co., Ltd., and their ceramic jar collection (above)

LEA Adonis, with one of her Venetian-inspired mirrors, owns and does designs for Sun & Shire, Inc.

ACCENT pieces made of recycled glass by Cebu-based Janice Minor Export, Inc.

ROBERTO Locsin of Locsin International

Exhibitors with the track record to produce world-class goods on time, Sun & Shire does background checks on applicants, including factory visits.

"We also check if they have enough workers to support production," said Soares. "We don't want to deal with traders, we want manufacturers. After all, our aim is also to generate livelihood and not just to sell floor space."

Exhibitors were grouped either as part of the "Philippine Collective" or the "Annex Pavilion." Hosted exclusively the latter as a group effort featuring the region's best companies and their most cutting edge designs.

Aside from Gonzales, Soares also tapped veteran furniture designer and Showcase 8 founder Budji Layug as an advisor before "Home Fusion" was launched three years ago.

An elite group of Philippine companies, mostly included, among others, Locsin International, Peter and Paul, Evolve, Awesome and Cielito, made up this year's Home Fusion.

Only Vietnam-based Thien Thanh Co., Ltd., handed Sun & Shire's invitation this year, but Soares is confident that the other would soon join since inaction as the Southeast Asian region continues to adapt and find new ways to compete as one with its own.

"It's our way of telling the world how good the region's designers are," said Soares. "After all, let's each see this not just hardcore competition as the Southeast Asian region continues to adapt and find new ways to compete as one with its own.

"It's our way of telling the world how good the region's designers are," said Soares. "After all, let's each see this not just hardcore competition as the Southeast Asian region continues to adapt and find new ways to compete as one with its own.

Visit www.homefusion.com.ph or call 845-5324 or 7596585.

Seminars on plant arts and business

THOSE WHO MAY WANT TO CASH IN ON PLANT arts may want to take the seminar-workshop by Barbara expert Trompitsch. Meditation the following dates:

July 24-25—Cement Pot Making. Projects to make are a bonsai pot or catch basin, a flower vase and a plant stand. Cement pots are more durable than clay and can be made in two to three days without using a potter's wheel, kiln and gas, electricity or firewood. Learn how to make molds and designing art pieces.

July 26-27—Succulent Terrarium Garden. Learn how to make a rocky dell like structure and design a water source. Learn the philosophy of wellness and relaxation. Wrap that of a Zen garden and save and maintenance.

July 28-August 1—Flower Arrangement for All Occasions. Day 1: Barbara tech hands on on Moribana and Shoka and lengthening the vase life of cut flowers. Day 2: Western style with hands-on on silhouette or one-sided and L-shape, sourcing of materials. Day 3: Western style with hands-on on crescent shape and Hogarth line, flower shop operation. Day 4: Free style, bridal centerpieces and garland-making. Day 5: Corsage, bridal bouquet making and other wedding necessities.

All seminars will be held 1-5 p.m. at Mitt's Plaza Arts shop, King Louis Garden Ceramic, Manila Bending Bamb, corner Edsa and Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Materials will be provided for all hands-on classes. Snacks, handouts and certificate will also be provided. Advance registration is required at least three days before the seminar/project starts.

A 10-percent discount will be given to those who register this first week of July.

Call 5094503, 8941502 or 8917-8021352.

See new, hear new and feel new at the Nokia Store

With the speed of technology evolving, it is no surprise that mobile phone manufacturers are constantly in a race to come up with devices that continue to delight, enthrall, and excite gadget crazy users.

So when its time to treat yourself to either your first Nokia mobile phone or an upgrade, where else can you go to get expert advice but at the Nokia Store? Deciding on the perfect Nokia mobile phone can be a very daunting task. There are so many things to consider when getting one. What features you need, what mobile phone with a built-in camera is best, what will allow you to access the internet or your email, or what design fits your personality the most.

Fortunately for Nokia lovers, Nokia stores are located all over the country, serving as a one-stop shop where you can see, touch, feel, and experience each Nokia phone so that you know what to treat yourself or your loved one to. For a total customer experience, top-notch phone repair and genuine mobile accessories are also available in most Nokia Stores.

Nokia Stores are located at the following convenient locations:

CMA
Nokia Store Greenbelt 1
Nokia Store Dit
Nokia Store Mcnalo
Nokia Store Festival
Nokia Store North EDsa
Nokia Store Gateway
Nokia Store Robinsons Manila
Nokia Concept Store Robinson Galleria
Nokia Store ATC
Nokia Concept Store Mall of Asia
Nokia Store Product
Nokia Concept Store Greenhills
Nokia Store Rockwell
Nokia Store High Street Fort
Nokia Store Tomorrow
Nokia Store SM Manila
Nokia Store SM Megamall

PROVINCIAL
Nokia Store Cabanatuan Downtown
Nokia Store SM Dasmarinas
Nokia Store Tuguegarao City
Nokia Store Limketkai Cagayan De Oro
Nokia Concept Store SM Cebu
Nokia Store SM Iloilo
Nokia Store SM Bacolod
Nokia Store Dagupan
Nokia Store SM Batangas
Nokia Store SM Pampanga
Nokia Store Ayala Center Cebu
Nokia Store KCC GenSan (soon to open)

Here's another reason to visit the Nokia store soon! Every purchase of a Nokia N95 8GB, Nokia N82 and Nokia N78 at participating Nokia stores, entitles you to:

- a free THE DARK KNIGHT™ USB flash drive from June 30 to July 31, 2008
- a free THE DARK KNIGHT™ digital photo keychain, from August 1 to 24, 2008 until supplies last.

For more THE DARK KNIGHT™ freebies, log in to www.nokia.com.ph/batman to download exclusive free THE DARK KNIGHT™ wallpapers, screensavers, ringtones, and motion comics produced exclusively for Nokia.

THE DARK KNIGHT™ is the follow-up movie to the action hit "Batman Begins". It reunites director Christopher Nolan and star Christian Bale, who reprises the role of Batman/Bruce Wayne. In the new film, Batman sets out to destroy organized crime in Gotham for good with the help of Lieutenant Jim Gordon (Gary Oldman) and District Attorney Harvey Dent (Aaron Eckhart). The triumvirate proves to be effective, but they soon find themselves prey to a rising criminal mastermind known as The Joker (Heath Ledger).

Nokia N78

Now everything joins up

Multimedia computer fuses music, navigation photography and mobility in new ways

Nokia has announced that its sleek new Nokia N78 multimedia computer is now available. The Nokia N78 ushers in a new era in convergence by blending the benefits of mobility with music, navigation and photography.

Additionally, the Nokia N78 enables consumers to take full advantage of a suite of Nokia services, including Nokia Maps and Share on Ovi - the online service that enables consumers to share their personal media. The Nokia N78 is expected to retail for approximately PhP22,990.00. With its signature sleek black surface the Nokia N78 will be available in these two stylish colors: cocoa brown, lagoon blue.

"The Nokia N78 fuses features in new ways," says William Hamilton-Whyte, General Manager, Nokia Philippines. "The integrated FM transmitter allows for tunes to be played via any car stereo. At the same time, the Nokia N78 features geotagging, which merges camera functionality and A-GPS to not only share pictures but the places where they were taken. The Nokia N78 is also compatible with a multitude of internet services such as Share on Ovi, Flickr or WOX blogs that enable consumers to create content right from the palm of their hand."

Following in the footsteps of the popular Nokia N73, the slim and trim Nokia N78 packs a powerful range of technologies, including high-speed connectivity via WLAN and HSDPA 3.5G, and a 3.2 megapixel camera with Carl Zeiss optics for great image quality. When it comes to navigation, the Nokia N78 knows its way around with an integrated A-GPS. Also included is a 90 day Navigation License and free Nokia Maps with up to 15 million global points of interest such as bars, cafes, restaurants, hotels and more.

The Nokia N78 is the first Nokia device to come with widgets enabled by Web Runtime technology. Combining the power of mobile with the power of the Internet, widgets, such as Weatherbug and RSS feed reader, allow consumers to get quick and easy access to their favorite web content. Widgets can be downloaded through the phones Download! folder.

The Nokia N78 is also among the first handsets to come with the integrated FM transmitter. When connected, "NOKIA" appears on the radio display indicating to the listeners that they have tuned into the correct music station - the Nokia N78. With its superb music quality, the Nokia N78 is a true companion for music lovers. The Nokia N78 supports microSD cards currently available up to 8GB, internal speakers and support for standard 3.5mm headphones as well as Nokia Internet Radio, giving instant access to thousands of radio stations around the world. What's more, consumers who buy the Nokia N78 get a free 8GB microSD and voucher for music download from MCA Music Inc. Get your favorite songs from top acts like Rihanna, Mariah Carey, Akon, FOB, Maroon 5, etc.

enjoy the bigger feature

See the action on your Nokia N95 8GB.
Download THE DARK KNIGHT™ movie trailer and other content at www.nokia.com.ph/batman

here's the deal

Equip yourself with free THE DARK KNIGHT™ gadgets when you buy selected Nokia Xseries devices.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Bernie C. Velarde

BACK TO WORK! Lorna Tolentino is expected to announce her decision today

Lorna sets out to fulfill Rudy's wish

By Marinell R. Cruz

FORTY DAYS FROM HER HUSband's death, actress Lorna Tolentino will have to decide whether or not she's ready to go back to work.

Lolit Solis, Lorna's manager, said the actress will make her decision known today during a gathering to commemorate the 40th day of Rudy Fernandez's passing.

The actor lost his two-year battle against pancreatic cancer on June 7. He was 56.

At 5 p.m. today a Mass in his honor will be celebrated at the Heritage Memorial Park in Taguig City.

The construction of a mausoleum for Rudy officially begins today as well, Solis announced.

The manager said Lorna seems to be still "in denial" and has been having migraine attacks, possibly due to stress and lack of sleep. "I think a specialist should see her. She's been fighting her urge to cry."

Lorna's newest attack, added Solis, happened last Sunday on "ASAP '08" where she appeared to promote Rudy's films that will soon be aired on the Kapamilya network.

"She sat inside the dressing room for so long. She was hurting, she couldn't move," Solis concluded.

She added that, before Rudy died, he asked Lorna to search for the remains of his departed parents, Gregorio Fernandez and Pet Pardo.

LORNA 02

INSIDE

Of Sam Milby's 3 wishes, he got one on his b'day/ E6

The Who honored

LOS ANGELES— THE WHO WILL TEED AF a special concert by a few bands outside of its generation.

The legendary band was honored at the Saturday taping of the third annual "VH1 Rock Honors," which will air Thursday on the cable channel.

Celebrity guests such as David Duchovny, Billy Bush, Simon Pegg, Owen Wilson and actors Samuel Jackson and Ving Rhames shared

The Flaming Lips, Foo Fighters, Incubus, Brandon Boyd, Pearl Jam, who covered songs from each Who album as "Tommy," "The Who Sell Out" and "Quadrophenia."

Who guitarist Pete Townshend and lead singer Roger Daltrey closed the special concert at SCLA's Bowl Pavilion with a performance of some of the band's greatest hits. Original drummer Keith Moon died in London in 1978. Original bassist John Entwistle died in Las Vegas in 2002. Moon and Entwistle were remembered in pre-taped retrospectives during the more than hour-long show.

"I have had a life of absolute privilege and wonder," Daltrey told AP Television News on the red carpet before the concerts. "How could it ever be bittersweet? I miss old friends, but they are with me. When we start playing our music, John (Entwistle) and Keith (Moon) echo with us all the time, so it's kind of like they never left."

ROGER Daltrey

"The Office" hilarious Jenna Fischer, dressed as Alice, John's character Local Lad from "Tommy," introduced The Flaming Lips, who performed a medley of songs from The Who's legendary 1969 rock opera. Flaming Lips frontman Wayne Coyne began the "Tommy" set inside a giant plastic bubble that

THE WHO 02

WHO'S HE LOOKING AT?

Jim Lihtenstein, director and writer on the runaway star Fourth Jury Prize for "Tribu" at the recent Paris cinema fest. Page 2A

Zap unwanted hair on your LEGS with LaserLight!

Call Postal Care at 892-3636 (Trunk)

Jollibee
Isang Pasasalamat, Bida Ang Lahat!
Anniversary Promo
Congratulations to our 4 Grand Prize winners of a Ford Everest!
Herman Nabor
Leda A. Relota
Reginald Planas
Raymundo Lopez
...and to our weekly winners of a Pamilya Showcase!!!
Langhap-sarap, bida sa lahat!

POWER PLANT CINEMA
ROCKWELL CENTER, MAKATI TEL. 898-4400

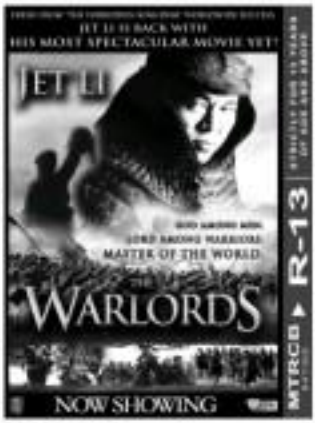
MAMMA MIA – PG13 1:10, 3:40, 6:10, 8:40	JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH – PG10 1:40, 3:50, 6:00, 8:10, 10:20	MAMMA MIA – PG13 12:30, 2:50, 5:20, 7:50, 10:30
HANCOCK – PG13 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00, 11:30	WARLORDS – R13 12:50, 3:10, 5:40, 8:00, 10:30	MAMMA MIA – PG13 1:20, 3:50

NOW SHOWING & COMING SOON SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

SHANG CINEPLEX
1. MAMMA MIA PG-13 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30
2. MAMMA MIA PG-13 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00
3. JOURNEY SP 12:10, 2:30, 5:00, 7:20, 9:50
4. HANCOCK PG-13 1:45, 4:00, 6:15, 8:30
5. MAMMA MIA PG-13 2:00, 5:30, 8:00
Shang's Season Ender Sale!
Endless Pleasures Raffle Promo
Shangri-La Plaza

SHOW TIME

RAMON JACINTO (LEFT), SETH AND THE TEOSECO Brothers (right) bring back the music of the '50s with a house tunes mini tomorrow at the Cagayan's Pan Hotel Makati. The gig is part of the "Greatest and the Latest" monthly concert series presented by RAM and PCSO. Hot will sing Astrud Gilberto classics, the Teosco brothers perform their own hits, and DJ will do a dance tunes medley and pay tribute to pop singer Jessa Zaragoza (of "Honeymoon" fame). Call 750-8000.



The Who honored

From page 61

traveled over the first few rows of the audience.

"It's an honor to honor what I consider to be the greatest band of all time," actor and "American O'clock singer Jack Black told the crowd before awkwardly performing "Squeeze Box" with musical partner Kyle Gass. "Wanna know why they were the greatest? Because they were the first ones to really rock hard."

No sellout

Sean Penn introduced Pearl Jam, which was joined for "Love Reign O'er Me" with an orchestra, and "The Real Me" with horn players. Pearl Jam lead singer Eddie Vedder and lead guitarist Mike McCready impressively paid homage to The Who's penchant for destroying instruments by throwing a microphone into the audience and a guitar up in the air.

"We know that we're all here tonight because The Who never did sell out, unlike certain tour de chumps," Penn told the crowd.

The Who wowed the packed audience with such tunes as "Baba O'Riley," "The Seeker," "My Generation," "Pinball Wizard," "Behind Blue Eyes," "Baba O'Riley," "Pinball Wizard," "Who Are You," "Substitute" and "Who Are You." Townshend stopped the band in the middle of performing "Won't Get Fooled Again" because of an issue with his speaker and later started the song anew from the beginning. Entire and Townshend closed the show with "Tea and Theatre."

EDDIE Vedder of Pearl Jam

JACK Black (right) and Kyle Gass of Tenacious D

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
THEATRE MALL
1 HANCOCK 2 MAMMA MIA
PROMENADE
3 HANCOCK PG-13 4 5 MAMMA MIA
MASSAGE 101
Tranquility Spa

MTRCB G
EDDIE MURPHY
EDDIE MURPHY
MEET DAVE
SOON

Eastwood City
DAUGHTRY
LIVE AT EASTWOOD CITY
July 29, 2008 • 8:00PM
Get your tickets NOW! Limited seats only!
Eastwood City
the bloomfields
Every Wednesday night • 8pm
Fiamma Circle
EASTWOOD CINEMAS
HANCOCK
MAMMA MIA
JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH
MAMMA MIA
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

MTRCB G
#1 MOVIE IN MANILA!
"A BIG VISUAL EFFECTS EXTRAVAGANZA!"
TRAPPED IN A LOST WORLD THAT IS ABOUT TO END... 3,950 MILES BENEATH THE EARTH... CAN THEY ESCAPE IN TIME?
NOW SHOWING
BRENDAN FRASER
JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH 3D
First time in the Philippines - exhibit of real prehistoric relics at the lobby of Glorietta 4, SM Megamall & SM Mall of Asia.

Lorna...

Front page ►

is, and his brothers. Rudy wanted all their females kept in the sacristan's milk bin, Isidro said. Eldest son Rolph is helping Lorna fulfill that wish.

Lorna co-hosts the Saturday show his second program "Star Talk" with Iyda, Joey de Leon and Randy Fenoseca. She has sounding offers from both GMA 7 and ABS-CBN to do a drama show. A talk show on the Kapamilya network is also being considered, and Iyda.

E-mail: nursa@inquirer.com.ph

LT's grace
From reader Chiko Ramirez (ramirez_jacob@yahoo.com):

If I were to pick one local TV/movie star to admire for looks and personality it's got to be LT! Throughout her latest ordeal, she carried herself admirably, becoming the embodiment of the true grace under pressure, her grace over grief.

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1 WANTED	2 JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH	3 MARLORDS	4 HANCOCK			
GLORIETTA 4	1 MARLORDS	2 HANCOCK	3 MAMMA MIA				
GREENBELT 1	1 HANCOCK	2 MAMMA MIA					
GREENBELT 3	1 JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH	2 MAMMA MIA					
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 WANTED	2 MAMMA MIA	3 HANCOCK	4 MARLORDS	5 JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH		
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 MARLORDS	2 WANTED	3 HANCOCK	4 JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH	5 MAMMA MIA		
MARKET! MARKET!	1 JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH	2 HANCOCK	3 WANTED	4 MAMMA MIA	5 MARLORDS		
TRINOMA	1 MY MONSTER MOM	2 THE INCREDIBLE HULK	3 WANTED	4 HANCOCK	5 MARLORDS	6 MAMMA MIA	7 JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

- Glorietta — UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOOD EXPO, July 17 & 18, Glorietta Activity Center
- Greenbelt — HUMANA EXHIBIT, July 1-17, Greenbelt 1 Lobby
- Alabang Town Center — Rebirth: Gary V Live!, July 26, 4pm, Activity Center
- Ayala Center Cebu — WORLD VISION EXHIBIT, July 1-16, Rotunda
- Market! Market! — GREAT LINKS CAR SHOW, July 17-20, Central Plaza
- Cristalla — SWEDISH: The perfect spot for romantic, elegantan & corporate events
- Ayala Museum — Juan Luna: Selected Paintings from the BP Collection on view until Aug 31
- Trinoma — Automatic Corner Appliance Fair, July 7-31, Trinoma Activity Center; Beats Rhythms, July 23 & 30, 7pm-8pm, Level 1, Piazza area

BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW!

GLORIETTA 4
GREENBELT 3
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
MARKET! MARKET!
TRINOMA
AYALA CENTER CEBU

OPENS JULY 17
AT AYALA MALLS CINEMAS

This bag was once a billboard. Now it's yours for free.

GET A CHANCE TO WIN A RECYCLED TARP BAG AND OTHER EXCITING PRIZES!

for every P500 worth of same-day purchase receipts from participating stores!

See outlets for details.
Promo is from July 1 to 31, 2008

Made of recycled tarpaulin materials, every bag is uniquely designed and one of its kind. Make a difference. Recycle. Grab one now!

Glorietta · Greenbelt · Alabang Town Center · Ayala Center Cebu · Trinoma · Tri-Noma

WES JAKOSA, PRESIDENT OF THE CULTURAL CENTER OF THE Philippines (CCP), has good news for Quezonians: Students "Tickets for gala screenings are sold out. We are thinking of adding screenings to accommodate everyone. We can very well exceed last year's record of 23,000 viewers." The CCP is one of Quezon's proponents.

Cheer Factor

Directed by
Baby Barredo & Joy Virata
August 9 to December 31, 2008
Onstage, 2nd Flr., Greenbelt 1, Burnside Estate cor. Legaspi St., Makati City
For details call 8020720 or log onto www.repertory-philippines.com
Tickets are also available through Ticket world at 8189999 or visit www.ticketworld.com.ph

July 19, 2008, Saturday
4:30 pm
Glorietta Activity Center

Ayala Malls Cinemas
GREENBELT • GLORIETTA
ALABANG TOWN CENTER • TRINOMA
Featuring
THX Certified Auditoriums
THX
Don't Just See a Movie.
"Enjoy the best movie experience EVER!"

THE WORLD'S GREATEST THIEF
IN THE NO. 1 ROBBERY
IN HISTORY.

JASON "THE TRANSPORTER" STATHAM
THE BANK JOB
IN CINEMAS JULY 23

'Stardust'

A YOUNG man named Tristan (Charlie Cox) tries to win the heart of Victoria (Sienna Miller), the beautiful but cold object of his desires, by going on a quest to retrieve a fallen star.

Tristan finds the star, which has transformed into a striking girl named Yvaine (Claire Danes). As he battles to survive threats along the way, his quest changes.

Peter O'Toole, Michelle Pfeiffer, Robert De Niro and Ricky Gervais also star.

'I Am Legend'

WILL Smith plays Robert Neville, a brilliant scientist who becomes Manhattan's lone survivor after a devastating virus eradicates the population's majority and turns the remaining few into deadly, mutated monsters.

After losing everything he knows and loves, Neville's singular focus is to find a cure for the infection, accompanied by his only companions, the ferocious dog Sam and his loyal friend Emma.

'Sweeney Todd'

JOHNNY Depp plays an infamous demon barber stalked in his quest for revenge for the death of his wife and daughter by his nosey neighbor and lecherous Beadles Gamer as the unctuous Mr. Lovett.

Also featured are Alan Rickman, Timothy Spall and Sacha Baron Cohen.

'Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee Creek'

STARRING Adam Beach and Aaron Paraspo, this action drama is about the late 19th century armed conquest and subjugation of native Americans Indians by the US government.

It climaxes in the horrific massacre by the US Cavalry of hundreds of members of the Sioux Indian tribe in Wounded Knee Creek in 1890.

In between, the TV movie highlights the misery suffered by the native people and the arrogance of corrupt American politicians, settlers and businessmen intent on profiting from the government's policies.

BEAT THE LINES
and get your tickets in advance
TICKETS are now AVAILABLE at Galleria, Ermita, Pioneer and Metro East from July 07 to 20
THE DARK KNIGHT
showing at
MOVIEWORLD
on JULY 17

Experience a spine-chilling love story you will never forget.

Due to public demand
July 16 to 22
Sa Pagdapo ng Mariposa Flies back to ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD ERMITA

Feedback

Correction

From @yyyyyyyyy@yahoo.com:

Tonight po ay umalis ako sa magsabing last time na mag-mall-crawl sa Alden Manila Pine Festival na ginanap nung nagsisimula 2008, ang "Days," gusto ko lang ipaalam na ang "Aurora" ang sinayaw nung AMFF noong 2007.

Pinarangalan po ng nagsayaw AMFF ang "Aurora" bilang best-costumedong animal-ed movie in Philippine Cinema. Nanood po ako sa Premiere ng 7th Hiroshima Animation Film Festival sa Japan nung 1998.

Brooke fan

From Cristina Gonzon (cjg626@yahoo.com.ph):

What I cherish most about Brooke Alarkia was not her modelling days but her intelligence.

Way back then, though I used to see her pictures regularly in many magazines, our paths then struck me most was how she valued education. I believe she had been a hard-working student at Princeton.

She has grown a lot. She has overcome intrigues with boldness and grace. As top-seller, she has improved, too.

More "Daddy-ish" issues? I would love to see her in "Up-stish Angles." (I'm a Carolyn Bradwell fan.)

Welcome, Lea

From Lalie Santos (lgarlessa@yahoo.com):

Hi, Lea. I'm glad to hear about your new column in the Inquirer. At least all your fans can now have first you as a weekly basis even though you are in other parts of the world. Would this column be out every Thursday? (Ms. —Ed.)

Also, could you please include in your column the schedule of your "Cinderella" tour?

CINEMA ACCESS: 635-5555

MOVIEWORLD

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMA MOVIE GUIDE

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

GALLERIA

1 MAMMA MIA!
2 MAMMA MIA!
3 MAMMA MIA!
4 HANCOCK
5 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
6 WANTED
7 MY MONSTER MOM
8 indieline: BARANG
9 KAMBYO
10 THE WARLORDS

ERMITA

1 MAMMA MIA!
2 MY MONSTER MOM
3 MAMMA MIA!
4 HANCOCK
5 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
6 THE WARLORDS
7 MAMMA MIA!
8 KAMBYO
9 WANTED

METRO EAST

1 MY MONSTER MOM
2 HANCOCK
3 MAMMA MIA!
4 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
5 WANTED
6 MAMMA MIA!
7 THE WARLORDS
8 KAMBYO

NOVALICHES

1 HANCOCK
2 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
3 THE WARLORDS
4 MAMMA MIA!

PIONEER

1 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
2 HANCOCK
3 MAMMA MIA!
4 THE WARLORDS

STA. ROSA

1 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
2 THE WARLORDS
3 FORBIDDEN KINGDOM
4 HANCOCK
5 MAMMA MIA!

LIPA

1 HANCOCK
2 GET SMART
3 WANTED
4 MY MONSTER MOM
5 MAMMA MIA!

DASMARIÑAS

1 HANCOCK
2 THE WARLORDS
3 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
4 MAMMA MIA!

IMUS

1 MAMMA MIA!
2 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
3 THE WARLORDS
4 HANCOCK

ANGELES

1 HANCOCK
2 MAMMA MIA!
3 MY MONSTER MOM
4 WANTED / SUPERHERO MOVIE

STARMILLS

1 MAMMA MIA!
2 ALONE
3 MY MONSTER MOM
4 SUPERHERO MOVIE
5 HANCOCK
6 WANTED

BACOLOD

1 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
2 HANCOCK
3 MAMMA MIA!
4 WANTED
5 SEX AND THE CITY
6 ALONE

ILOILO

1 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
2 MY MONSTER MOM
3 MAMMA MIA!
4 HANCOCK
5 ALONE
6 WANTED

SM CINEMA

movietime

visit www.smcinema.com • powered by yehey.com

WATCH-AND-WIN PROMO

WIN SPECIAL GIFT VOUCHERS FROM SORCI AGE BY WADDAH!

Buy 2 tickets of the movie at any SM Cinema branch nationwide for your chance to win!

Promo period is from July 10-16, 2008.

Special thanks to: sorci

NOW SHOWING

METRO MANILA

RESERVED SEATS NOW AVAILABLE

IMAX
KUNG FU PANDA
DEEP SEA
T-REX

THE PODIUM
MAMMA MIA!
HANCOCK
LATE SCREENINGS

3D CINEMA 1

SM MALL OF ASIA
RESERVED
RESERVED
RESERVED

SM MEGAMALL
SM NORTH EDSA
SM CITY FAIRVIEW
SM CITY SAN LAZARO
SM CITY CLARK
SM CITY BACOOR
SM CITY SAN JOSE
SM CITY MARILAO
SM CITY BICUTAN
SM CITY SAN MATEO
SM CITY MARIKINA
SM CITY CEBU
SM CITY BACOLOD
SM CITY ILOILO
SM CITY DAVAO
SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
SM CITY GENERAL SANTOS

SOON TO OPEN

LUZON

SM CITY BALIWAG
SM CITY BAGUIO
SM CITY BAY
SM CITY BATANGAS
SM CITY CALAMBA
SM CITY CANLUBANG
SM CITY CLARK
SM CITY DASMARIÑAS
SM CITY GRAND CENTRAL
SM CITY LA UNION
SM CITY LEGAZPI
SM CITY LUCENA
SM CITY MASINAG
SM CITY NAGA
SM CITY OLONGAPO
SM CITY PAMPANGA
SM CITY SAN FERNANDO
SM CITY SAN PABLO
SM CITY SORSOGON
SM CITY STA. MESA
SM CITY TARLAC
SM CITY TUGUEGARAO

SOON TO OPEN

VISAYAS • MINDANAO

SM CITY ARANETA
SM CITY BACOLOD
SM CITY CEBU
SM CITY DAVAO
SM CITY ILOILO
SM CITY MARILAO
SM CITY MASINAG
SM CITY TARLAC

ALL SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

What you've always wanted to know about Dingdong

HERE ARE THINGS YOU'VE ALWAYS wanted to ask Dingdong Avanzat but were just too unconcerned to ask.

Where is heaven for you and how do you get there?

I wouldn't know because I have not found it yet. But I feel close to being there whenever I fulfill the task of helping someone, regardless of needs.

If you were not born handsome, do you think your life would have taken a different turn?

Being "just" handsome will not take a person anywhere. It takes a whole lot of interesting personality to be in this kind of industry. So handsome or not, I'm certain I would still be in the same line—the arts and public service.

What's the best part about being Dingdong Dantes?

Out a hunting a unique name.

What don't you like about yourself?

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

I type so slow on the computer. Or maybe, there are just too many ideas my fingers can't coordinate properly.

How do you deal with women who flirt even if they know you're already taken?

I deal with them the best way that I can. I give them back what is due.

Is there anything you want to redo if only you could turn back the hands of time?

No, I would love to redo my whole high school life. It was the best four years of my life.

What do you miss most about your life before you became famous?

For me, life is just exciting, so I can't say I honestly miss parts of it. My experiences in the past will never be forgotten because they always play a huge part in how I arrive for an audition every day. Also, I do not consider myself famous.

What's one thing people don't know about you?

They say what you're asleep, my eyes are half open. Even I don't know this.

When die you feel sexiest?

When I'm in a tuxedo.

What are your unfulfilled dreams?

To be a mother.

If you could trade places with one person for a day, who would it be and why?

I've always wanted to be the bodyguard of any high-ranking, important person. But if I'll include a non-human,

DINGDONG DANTES

I'd choose to be Nancy Aquino's close-in security when he was pursued down. That historical scene has always been playing in my mind, and knowing what really happened. With that made-up, I can bet two bucks with one straw, and perhaps, even save the situation.

If you had the power to change local show biz, what would you want to alter in the current?

Working sessions, meet, labor rules, and events must operate by seasons. The audiences

3 wishes, one fulfilled

KIDOY lenses. Kare is an Xilica fanatic.

By Rayani Sari Diego Jr.

BELIEVED

That's how Juan Miller this silver his and Pedro Penoud's filed case against manager-columnist Lolit Solis was successfully resolved in May.

"I realized that intrigues are part of show biz," he explains. "At some time shouldn't be tolerated. A friend actually asked me if [the matter linking him with Diolo] were true. Friends should know better, but that's how naysers would taste people's minds."

He's happy to put the controversy behind him, though, and would rather focus on work. He's been deluged with a slew of projects and endorsement deals.

He is also slated to play Adonis...a mythical, make that sexy, beast—on the ABS-CBN fantasy series "Encanto," supplied by powerful pitchers Aces Cortés.

Filipino classes

Apart from physically preparing for the part (he shed 7lb first), he's also swooning his Filipino classes.

Mastering the language is this Filipino-American's top priority.

"Gusto ko talagang matuto. If really want to learn," he says. "I don't want to have to play child-hopper forever."

His tutor has been Kare Adenia. Bonus dad (good, "Tech '76, but he's still running his own hydraulics repair business."

What's one thing people don't know about you?

I'm very sensitive. But when hurt or angered as in I could be—yes, where push comes to shove, it's best really what drives me. Sometimes I'm misunderstood as being "mataray" when I'm actually just trying to be professional.

Where is heaven for you and how do you get there?

I wouldn't know because I have not found it yet. But I feel close to being there whenever I fulfill the task of helping someone, regardless of needs.

If you were not born handsome, do you think your life would have taken a different turn?

Being "just" handsome will not take a person anywhere. It takes a whole lot of interesting personality to be in this kind of industry. So handsome or not, I'm certain I would still be in the same line—the arts and public service.

What's the best part about being Dingdong Dantes?

Out a hunting a unique name.

What don't you like about yourself?

Is there anything you want to redo if only you could turn back the hands of time?

No, I would love to redo my whole high school life. It was the best four years of my life.

What do you miss most about your life before you became famous?

For me, life is just exciting, so I can't say I honestly miss parts of it. My experiences in the past will never be forgotten because they always play a huge part in how I arrive for an audition every day. Also, I do not consider myself famous.

What's one thing people don't know about you?

They say what you're asleep, my eyes are half open. Even I don't know this.

When die you feel sexiest?

When I'm in a tuxedo.

What are your unfulfilled dreams?

To be a mother.

If you could trade places with one person for a day, who would it be and why?

I've always wanted to be the bodyguard of any high-ranking, important person. But if I'll include a non-human,

I'd choose to be Nancy Aquino's close-in security when he was pursued down. That historical scene has always been playing in my mind, and knowing what really happened. With that made-up, I can bet two bucks with one straw, and perhaps, even save the situation.

If you had the power to change local show biz, what would you want to alter in the current?

Working sessions, meet, labor rules, and events must operate by seasons. The audiences

DINGDONG DANTES

Yin stire as figure shorter also instilled discipline in him, Juan notes. "I used to visit every single day."

Yes, he's striking while the iron is hot, but he hopes to spend more time with his parents and sister who are in the US.

Another wish is to work with other leading ladies like KC Concepcion and Angel Locsin. "So power nay ermandez."

More urgently, he set his heart recently on something, and got it for his birthday last May 23, his gift from Aces:

"She gave me an Xbox 360. He also got me [the game] Hush Hush Engrossed. Juan 24 [years old] vs 56 in an Archer," he quips, not hiding his pleasure at all.

[E-mail] [mayrsanidiego@yahoo.com]

Very passionately Greek

MEDITE STRIKES IN ONE OF THE BEST moments in the movies. Not like isn't exactly what you could call a monumentally lovable one. So, we initially wonder why the position of the film version of the hit stage musical "Mamma Mia!" yielded her to the producers' favorite local.

After watching the film in person last July 9, we have our answer: Meryl Streep was tapped to "carry" the movie because nobody else in her age group could possibly have played the role as well as she does.

Streep and Ian about it, "Mamma Mia!" is Streep's film from the get-go, despite the similarly luminous stellar presence of the gifted likes of Pierce Brosnan, Colin Firth, Julie Walters and Christine Baranski.

What makes Streep's performance so choice? She's cast as Donna, a former singer and free spirit who runs a little hotel in Greece. Life is difficult but fun, and she's wonderfully happy with her independent existence—until her 20-year-old daughter, Sophie, decides to marry for equally-young beau, Sky.

What's the problem? Well, Donna is a single mother, and Sophie doesn't know who her dad is—so, who's going to give her away at the wedding?

One of three men

To answer that key question (without telling her mother), Sophie peeks into Donna's old diary and discovers that last dad could be—one of three men her mom loved in her "wild" youth! After getting over her shock, Sophie decides to invite all three men to her wedding.

Hell, you can imagine what Donna thinks about that. The rest of the movie concerns itself with resolving past issues and making sure that they can no longer compromise the otherwise happy engaged couple's present and future.

That's to tell, the movie's plot isn't as original as it could be—true, where push comes to shove, it isn't really what drives the film forward and makes it an exhilarating viewing experience. The film is loads of fun because of its cheerful use of ABBA hit songs from start to finish—and Streep's winsome and winning performances.

Those songs are all director Phyllida Lloyd needs to get to work with those stopping production numbers that make the film a seemingly endless celebration of life and love, Greek-style.

It's the Greek factor that motivates Lloyd and her actors to play their scenes and musical numbers in a distinctly over-the-top way. It's passionately Greek without actors and dramas to be good measure.

Musical surprises

Objectively speaking, this excessive energy sometimes comes off as shrill and manic, and even Streep's otherwise memorable performance is occasionally compromised and rendered gauche by the excesses.

After a while, however, we get over the excesses, and learn to deal with it.

The film is full of musical surprises, led by Streep's fine rendition of some chal-lenging songs. Because she succeeds handily, by crooning a couple of tunes, not so well as Streep, but tolerably well enough.

And both supporters are added for the win by Walters and Baranski, who play Donna's former hookup singers the middle-aged good buddies.

Screenwriters Amanda Seyfried (Sophie) and Dominic Cooper (Sky) also do well as the movie's young lovers, but they end up getting swamped and thoroughly upstaged by their mature co-stars. Which just goes to prove that youth is gone, but you can't beat experience and well-honed show biz smarts.

Despite its occasional storytelling and singing lapses, "Mamma Mia!" is a burst of fresh air, a blast of sunlight, and proof positive that, in the movies, life can be a beach, especially if it's located on an island in gorgeous, sumptuous sunny Greece!

Busy week for actor-politician

By the INQUIRER and INQUIRER.net Entertainment staff

JOSEPH ACTOR-POLITICIAN, WHOSE only much married, is a notorious womanizer.

Last year, chronic infamous reported him romancing Benny Quezon. Recently, BQ reportedly threw a birthday party for her two-year-old kid at a country club in a posh village where BAP was also reported to have bought a house for her.

Cynosure the door. Did was opened at the middle party.

Joke among friends

Lolit's male buddies constantly joke about BAP's "issues" to that push off. But,

Once, he told pals he was going home to his suburban for a quick shower.

But buddy joked: "I thought we were neighbors in (name name of push vil-lage)."

Hot subject

Last weekend, Reuters received a text message that BAP was spotted in a five-star resort on Boracay Island—in the company of Maggy Beauty No, not Beauty Queen, this one's a brazilian model!

A journalist who was vacationing on the island confirmed the report, saying BAP was the hottest subject at the Caticlan airport where he was seen with LB. Full deed.

Doing very well

NICE, France—"Everything went smoothly. The children are doing very well, the mother is doing very well and the father is doing very well," gynecologist Mirbel Noumeau said Sunday of Hollywood golden couple Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie and their newborn twins.

The boy, named Knox Leon, weighed 2.27 kilos and the girl, called Vivienne Marcheline, 2.26 kilos, according to a maternity ducie Jones. Jolie, 33, gave birth to the twins via Caesarean delivery earlier than scheduled, during a hallhour Caesarean operation.

Pitt, who had previously attended the birth, also by Caesarean section, of their daughter Shiloh in May 2006, "was very calm and was not at all disturbed" by the operation, said Noumeau. "When the babies arrived he was very euphoric" and Jolie had a "bleeding smile," he added.

The first photograph of the baby celebrities was sold to a US paper for $3 million, the regional Nice-Matin newspaper said, adding that the money would be given to a humanitarian cause. /AFP

Sir George honored

LOS ANGELES—Sir George Martin, the classically trained producer who helmed the Beatles recordings from their mop-top phase through their late musical masterworks, was honored Saturday night in Los Angeles.

Martin, 82, received a career award from The Recording Academy's Grammy Foundation. He is the most successful record producer of all time, according to the academy, with more than 30 chart-topping hits and one billion units sold.

The wife Giles Martin received the tribute, saying it was a "huge honor" for his father. "But he always said, 'They give me an honor for still being alive.' You know, because he's English, and we're very self-depressing." /AP

Top of the talk shows

For those who missed last weekend's goldrush on TV. (And why were you missed, if we are missed.)

•Pinky Amador, on meeting Judy Ann Santos and Ryan Agoncillo on the show only back to Manila from the Paris Classic International Film Festival:

"Ayaw nawang problema... hi, hello lang. That's it." (Hearing aids?)

•Judy Ann, on reports of Pinky and her entourage and their group, which included Sunset Ryan, snubbed male actor on the connecting flight from Dubai:

"Walang katotohanan na nangyari 'ang hi, hello.' Nag-appear-an nila si Pinky. Matatanda na kami, mga nanay na... kundangan, siguro gimmick na nila ng Bayo na magbibida sina na dati mga na sa mga ang tao." (We're much on "matatandang nanay.")

•John Lloyd Cruz, on having Ben Affleck's body-guard Chris Cannon:

"Explicit naman sa isang tao... na nag-audition kay mga producers ko sa kapwa nang aktaing." (Meron' lang explicit, kasi ego...)

•John Lloyd, answering a lopsided question about meeting Sarah Geronimo:

"Sir ego kahapag artistic aspects, kasi lang si Sarah Geronimo." (That's not much, is it?)

•Onanes del Valle, asked to comment on the annulment of Vhong Navarro and Bianca Lopez's marriage:

"I don't think I have any right... Bata pa... ang-kasi-ni Vhong. Ako lang." (Shucks.)

•Melissa Ricks, asked if she was mad at Claudine Barretto for slapping her in a scene of their new soap where it was not part of the script:

"Hindi po. Hindi po po ako. At least, nakakuha ako ng eksena." (Cheeky!)

•Claudine, on her biggest sacrifice while making the show:

"Si Rayanne at Yang kids nag-a-adjust. Malayo ako kahit sa art kasi parang hindi rin ako nakapanood nakikita." (But this boy pose at the time, girl.)

•Lolit de Leon, on an encounter with Dian Aunor's alleged partner, Shai Reyes:

"Hindi naging magandang pagpapakilala namin. I will not elaborate... Basta hindi ako pinasi down at pinatay ko. (Yeah ito na pinagsabihan kasi ang mga bagay na hindi na sa akin nangyarding